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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

MAHABHARATA

THE YEARS IN EXILE

- THE REUNION
- DURYODHANA HUMBLED
- THE TWELFTH YEAR

IBH

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THE YEARS IN EXILE

Veda Vyasa's epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya, a great-grandson of Vyasa, and the many learned sages assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The earlier volumes of our rendering of the Mahabharata described how the Pandava and the Kaurava princes grew up in an atmosphere of rivalry, the marriage of Draupadi to the Pandavas, the gain and loss of Indraprastha and the banishment of the Pandavas to the forest. Arjuna acquired celestial weapons from the devas in preparation for the war with the Kauravas which now seemed inevitable.

Our next three volumes of the Mahabharata narrate the events during the subsequent years in exile, the pilgrimage undertaken by the Pandavas while Arjuna is away and Duryodhana's attempt to humiliate the Pandavas at Dwaitavana.

Duryodhana's plan backfires and he himself has to face the humiliation of being rescued by the Pandavas. Later, Jayadratha tries to abduct Draupadi and has to face the wrath of the Pandavas.

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Mahabharata – 22
THE REUNION

O HOLY ONE, AFTER ARJUNA'S DEPARTURE TO INDRALOKA HOW DID HIS BROTHERS AND DRAUPADI SPEND THEIR DAYS?

WITHOUT ARJUNA, O MONARCH, THEY WERE FILLED WITH SORROW.

"THEY CONTINUED TO LIVE IN THE KAMYAKA FOREST IN PROFOUND MELANCHOLY.

"DRAUPADI REMEMBERING ARJUNA, ONE DAY ADDRESSED YUDHISHTHIRA THUS—

IN ARJUNA'S ABSENCE THE EARTH SEEMS TO BE FORLORN. EVEN THIS FOREST WITH ITS BLOSSOMING TREES DOES NOT SEEM AS DELIGHTFUL AS BEFORE. IN HIS ABSENCE I CANNOT FEEL ANY HAPPINESS, O KING!

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"HEARING DRAUPADI LAMENT THUS, BHEEMA SAID—

O BEAUTIFUL ONE, YOU HAVE SPOKEN TRULY INDEED. WITHOUT ARJUNA THE SKY SEEMS TO BE WITHOUT THE SUN AND SPACE ITSELF APPEARS TO BE EMPTY. THERE IS NO PEACE FOR ME WITHOUT HIM IN THIS FOREST.

"THEN NAKULA IN A VOICE CHOKED WITH EMOTION SAID—

INDEED WHAT HAPPINESS CAN WE FIND IN THE WOODS WITHOUT THAT HERO EQUAL TO A GOD. I DO NOT DESIRE TO LIVE IN THE KAMYAKA FOREST ANY LONGER.

"AND SAHADEVA LAMENTED—

O KING, MY HEART IS INCONSOLABLE. I PREFER LEAVING THIS FOREST TO LIVING HERE WITHOUT ARJUNA. THERE IS NO HAPPINESS WITHOUT HIM.

"HEARING THESE WORDS YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME SADDER THAN BEFORE.

"JUST THEN THE CELESTIAL RISHI NARADA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

"BEHOLDING HIM KING YUDHISHTHIRA AND HIS BROTHERS STOOD UP AND DULY WORSHIPPED THE ILLUSTRIOUS SAGE.

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"RISHI NARADA, ACCEPTING THE WORSHIP, COMFORTED THE SONS OF PANDU. ADDRESSING YUDHISHTHIRA HE SAID —

TELL ME WHAT IS WORRYING YOU AND HOW I CAN HELP YOU.

IF MY BROTHERS AND I ARE WORTHY OF RECEIVING YOUR GRACE, TELL ME WHAT MERIT MAY BE EARNED BY GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE ROUND THE EARTH.

"THEN NARADA SAID —

O KING, THE WISE BHEESHMA ONCE PUT THE SAME QUERY TO THE GREAT RISHI PULASTYA, WHO HAD APPEARED BEFORE HIM...

... AND PULASTYA DESCRIBED TO HIM THE MERIT TO BE OBTAINED BY VISITING THE VARIOUS TEERTHAS*

SO, O MONARCH, NARADA RELATED TO THE PANDAVAS THE NAMES OF VARIOUS TEERTHAS THAT WERE TO BE VISITED.

"AND JUST BEFORE TAKING LEAVE OF THE FOUR PANDAVAS HE SAID —

THE GREAT RISHI LOMASHA WILL VISIT YOU SOON IN THE KAMYAKA FOREST. FOLLOW MY ADVICE AND VISIT THE PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE ALONG WITH HIM AND GREAT FAME WILL BE YOURS.

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* PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE

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"LOMASHA ARRIVED AS HAD BEEN TOLD BY NARADA. YUDHISHTHIRA RECEIVED HIM WITH PROPER CEREMONY AND ENQUIRED ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT.

DURING THE COURSE OF MY WANDERINGS I WENT TO INDRALOKA. THERE TO MY GREAT SURPRISE I SAW ARJUNA SEATED WITH LORD INDRA.

AND THE LORD OF THE CELESTIALS THEN SAID TO ME — CALL ON THE SONS OF PANDU.

SO AT THE BEHEST OF INDRA AND AT ARJUNA'S REQUEST, I HAVE COME HERE.

O YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA HAS ACQUIRED CELESTIAL WEAPONS.

HE HAS ALSO MASTERED THE ARTS OF DANCING, MUSIC, SINGING AND RECITATION.

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"I HAVE BROUGHT A MESSAGE TO YOU FROM HIM——

TELL YUDHISHTHIRA THAT I WILL JOIN THEM SOON, ON HAVING ACCOMPLISHED THE GREAT TASK OF ACQUIRING THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS. BUT MEANWHILE THEY COULD DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO AUSTERITIES AT THE VARIOUS TEERTHAS.

PLEASE ALSO PROTECT THE SONS OF KUNTI FROM RAKSHASAS AND WATCH OVER THEM DURING THE JOURNEY THROUGH HAZARDOUS REGIONS.

IN OBEDIENCE TO INDRA AND AT THE REQUEST OF ARJUNA, I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU ON YOUR PILGRIMAGE.

THOUGH I HAVE VISITED THE TEERTHAS TWICE, I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU ON THE JOURNEY UNDERTAKEN BY MANU AND OTHER ROYAL RISHIS.

INDEED BY WORSHIPPING AT THE TEERTHAS ALL FEAR WILL BE BANISHED.

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YOU ARE VIRTUOUS, TRUE TO YOUR WORD AND FIRM IN THE PRACTICE OF DHARMA. BY THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE TEERTHAS YOU WILL BE FREED FROM ALL TAINTS OF WORLDLY ATTACHMENT.

"AN OVERWHELMED AND DELIGHTED YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED—

O GREAT BRAHMANA, I CANNOT FIND THE WORDS TO GIVE YOU AN ANSWER. I AM FORTUNATE THAT I AM REMEMBERED BY INDRA AND IT IS INDEED A BLESSING THAT YOU WILL ACCOMPANY US ON OUR JOURNEY. I HAVE DECIDED TO START ON THE PILGRIMAGE AT THE HOUR APPOINTED BY YOU.

"BUT THEN LOMASHA SAID—

O MIGHTY KING, TRAVEL WITH A SMALL RETINUE, FOR THEN YOUR PILGRIMAGE WILL BE MORE COMFORTABLE.

"SO YUDHISHTHIRA ADDRESSED THE BRAHMANAS AND MENDICANTS WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM—

LET THOSE WHO ARE INCAPABLE OF BEARING HUNGER AND THIRST, THE FATIGUES OF TRAVEL AND TOIL...

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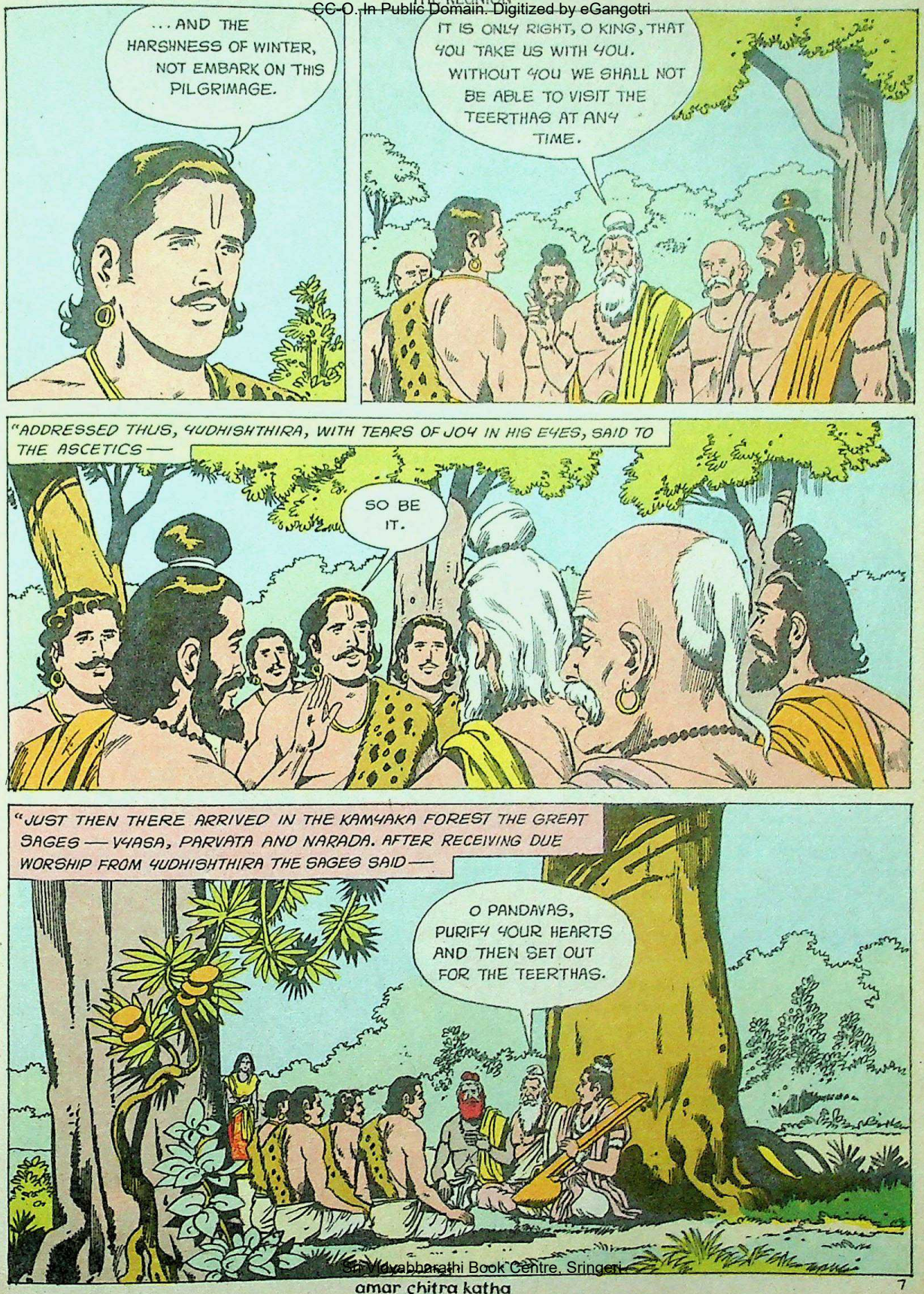

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"SO, ON A MORNING FOLLOWING A FULL MOON NIGHT, THE PANDAVAS ACCOMPANIED BY LOMASHA, DHAUMYA AND OTHER ASCETICS, SET OUT TOWARDS THE EAST. THEY WERE DRESSED IN BARKS AND HIDES AND FULLY ARMED.

"ON THE JOURNEY, YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME TROUBLED IN HIS MIND AND SO HE ADDRESSED LOMASHA—

WHY DO I SUFFER? O GREAT RISHI, I DO NOT THINK THAT I AM WITHOUT MERIT.

MY ENEMIES ARE DEVOID OF GOOD QUALITIES AND ARE NOT ADDICTED TO DHARMA. YET WHY DO THEY PROSPER IN THIS WORLD?

"THEN LOMASHA EXPLAINED—

O KING, A MAN MAY SEEM TO PROSPER BY HIS SINS, OBTAIN GOOD FROM IT AND EVEN VANQUISH HIS FOES. DESTRUCTION WILL, HOWEVER, ALWAYS OVERTAKE HIM TO THE ROOTS.

I HAVE SEEN MANY DEMONS PROSPER IN SIN, BUT I HAVE ALSO SEEN THEM DESTROYED.

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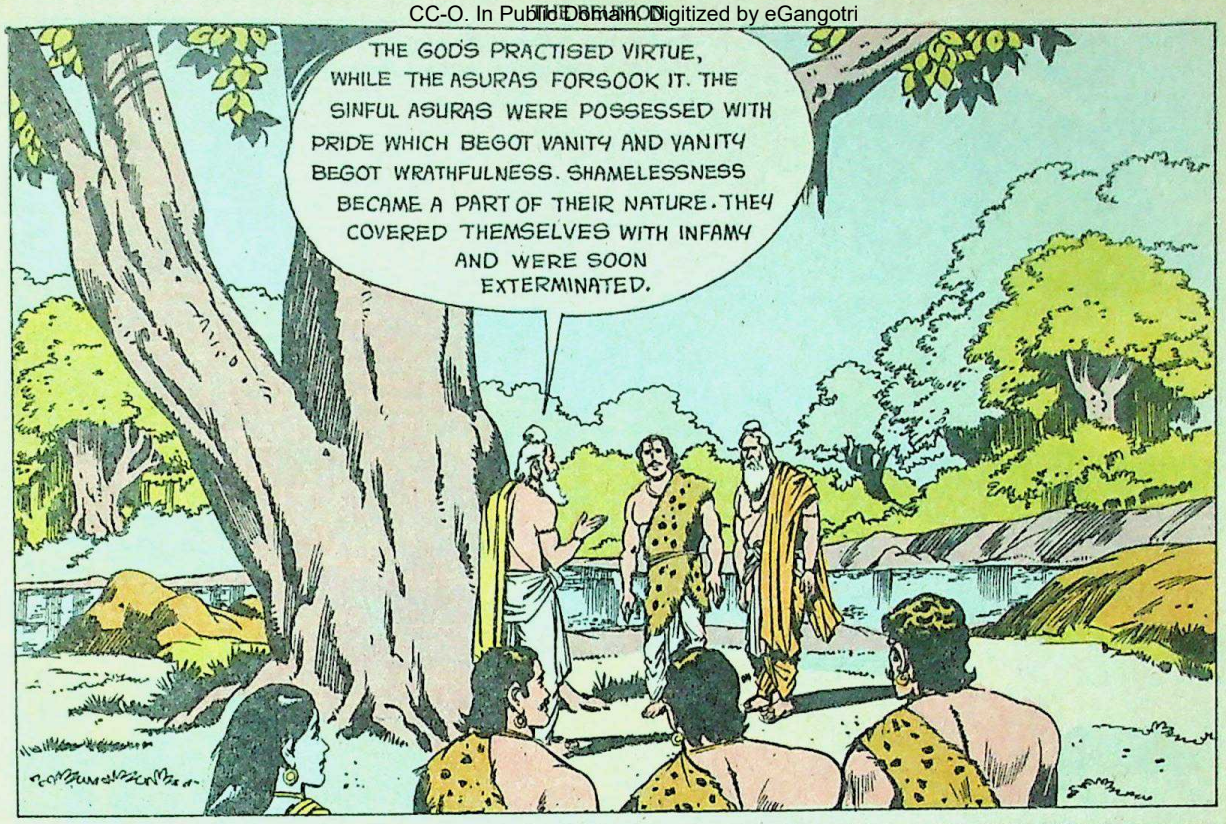
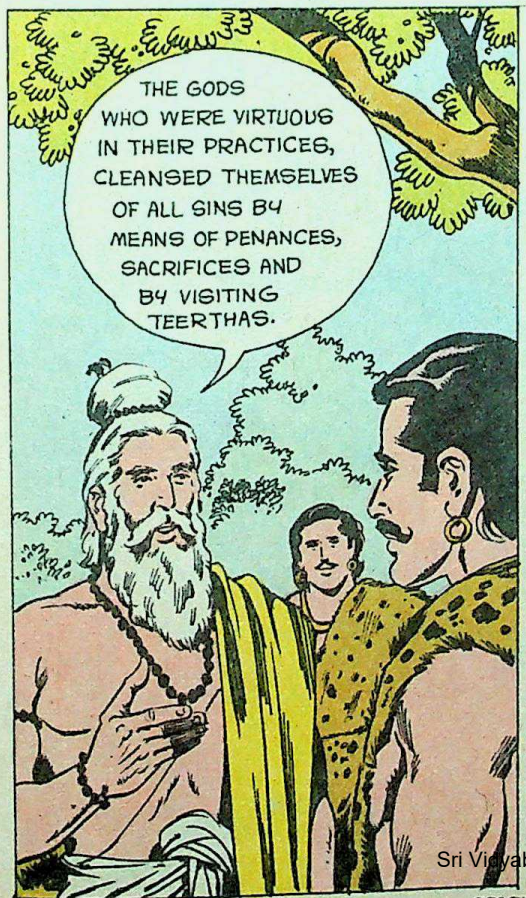
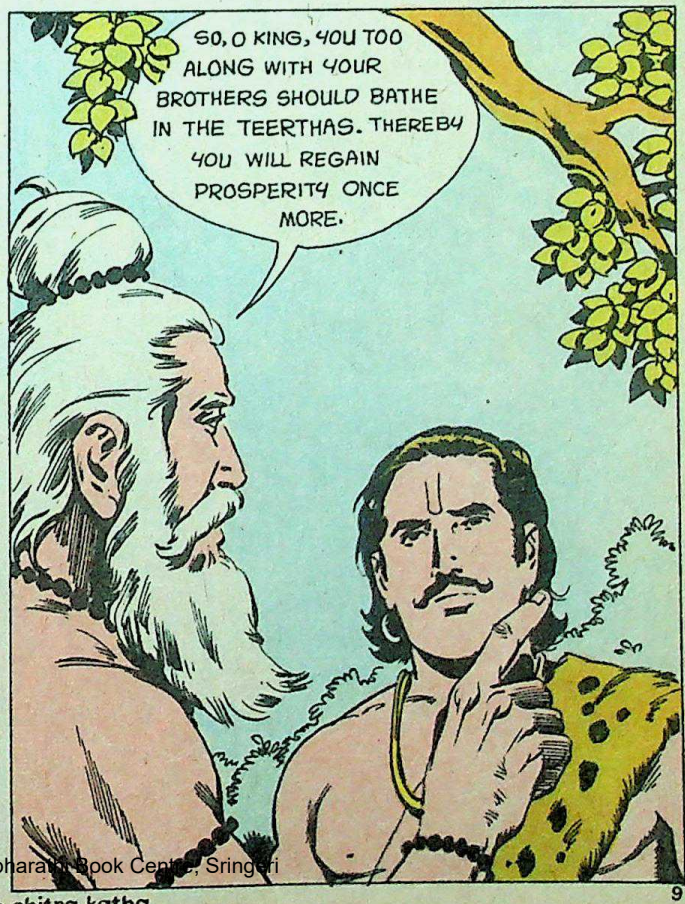
THE BELIEVER

THE GODS PRACTISED VIRTUE, WHILE THE ASURAS FORSOOK IT. THE SINFUL ASURAS WERE POSSESSED WITH PRIDE WHICH BEGOT VANITY AND VANITY BEGOT WRATHFULNESS. SHAMELESSNESS BECAME A PART OF THEIR NATURE. THEY COVERED THEMSELVES WITH INFAMY AND WERE SOON EXTERMINATED.







THE GODS WHO WERE VIRTUOUS IN THEIR PRACTICES, CLEANSED THEMSELVES OF ALL SINS BY MEANS OF PENANCES, SACRIFICES AND BY VISITING TEERTHAS.

SO, O KING, YOU TOO ALONG WITH YOUR BROTHERS SHOULD BATHE IN THE TEERTHAS. THEREBY YOU WILL REGAIN PROSPERITY ONCE MORE.

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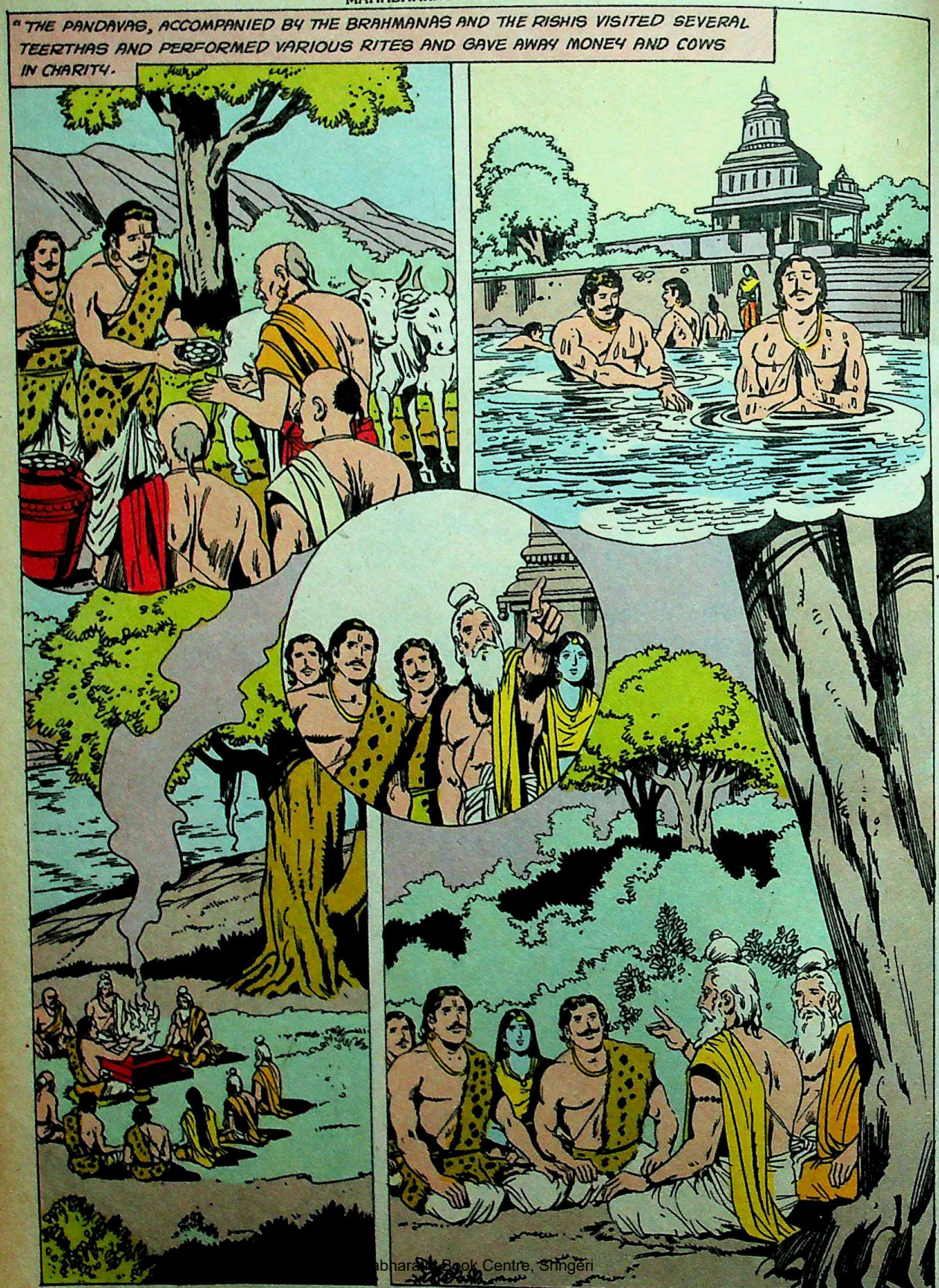

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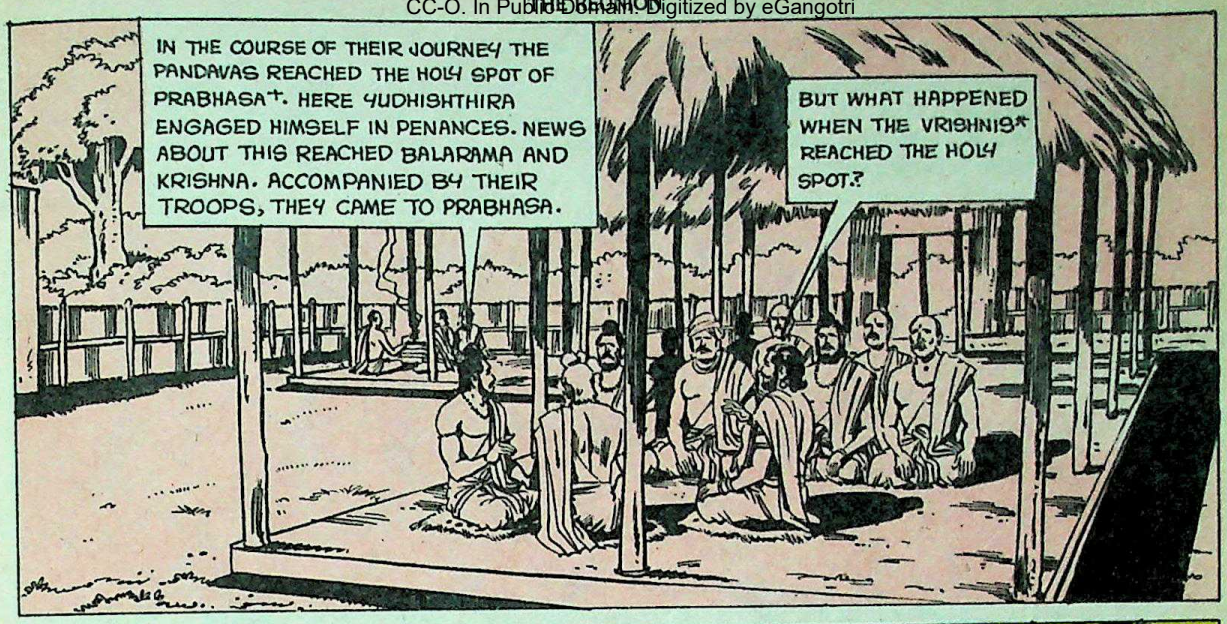

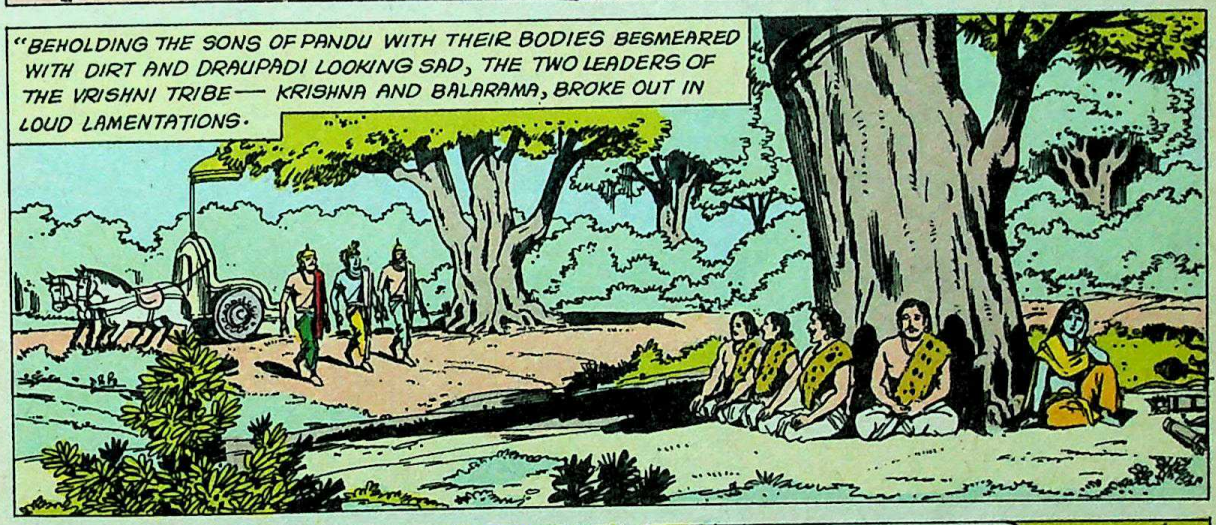

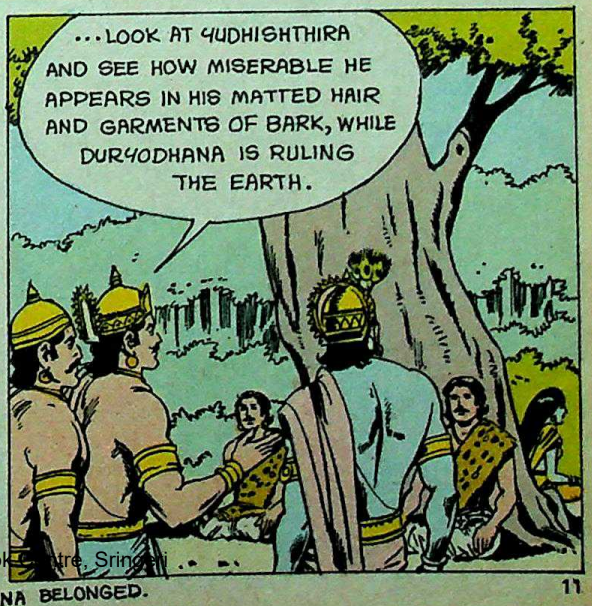

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+NEAR DWARAKA * THE CLAN TO WHICH BALARAMA AND KRISHNA BELONGED.

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"THEN SATYAKI, ONE OF THE VRISHNIS SAID—

O BALARAMA, THIS IS NO TIME FOR LAMENTATION. LET US ACT ON OUR OWN AND DO WHAT IS PROPER. YUDHISHTHIRA IS NOT ONE WHO WILL SPEAK ABOUT HIS TROUBLES.

THOSE WHO HAVE PEOPLE TO LOOK AFTER THEIR WELFARE DO NOT UNDERTAKE ANYTHING THEMSELVES. SO IT IS UP TO US TO GO TO THE AID OF THE SONS OF PANDU.

SO LET THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA BE SWEPT AWAY BY THE VRISHNI FORCES AND BE SENT TO THE ABODE OF YAMA.

THEN LET ABHIMANYU* RULE THE WORLD TILL THE LARGE-HEARTED AND NOBLE YUDHISHTHIRA FULFILS HIS VOWS. AFTERWARDS THE EARTH WILL COME UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF YUDHISHTHIRA.

"BUT KRISHNA SAID—

O SATYAKI, YOU SPOKE WELL. BUT YUDHISHTHIRA WOULD NEVER ACCEPT EVEN THE OVERLORDSHIP OF THE WHOLE EARTH IF IT WAS NOT WON BY THE STRENGTH OF HIS OWN ARMS.

"THEN YUDHISHTHIRA INTERVENED AND SAID—

O SATYAKI, IT IS NOT STRANGE THAT YOU SPEAK THUS. BUT TO ME TRUTH IS THE FIRST CONSIDERATION, ABOVE THAT OF SOVEREIGN POWER ITSELF. AND THE TRUTH IS THAT I HAVE TO COMPLETE MY YEARS IN EXILE. WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR FEATS AND BRAVERY, KRISHNA WILL BE WITH US TO INFLICT DEFEAT ON THE ENEMY.

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* ARJUNA'S SON

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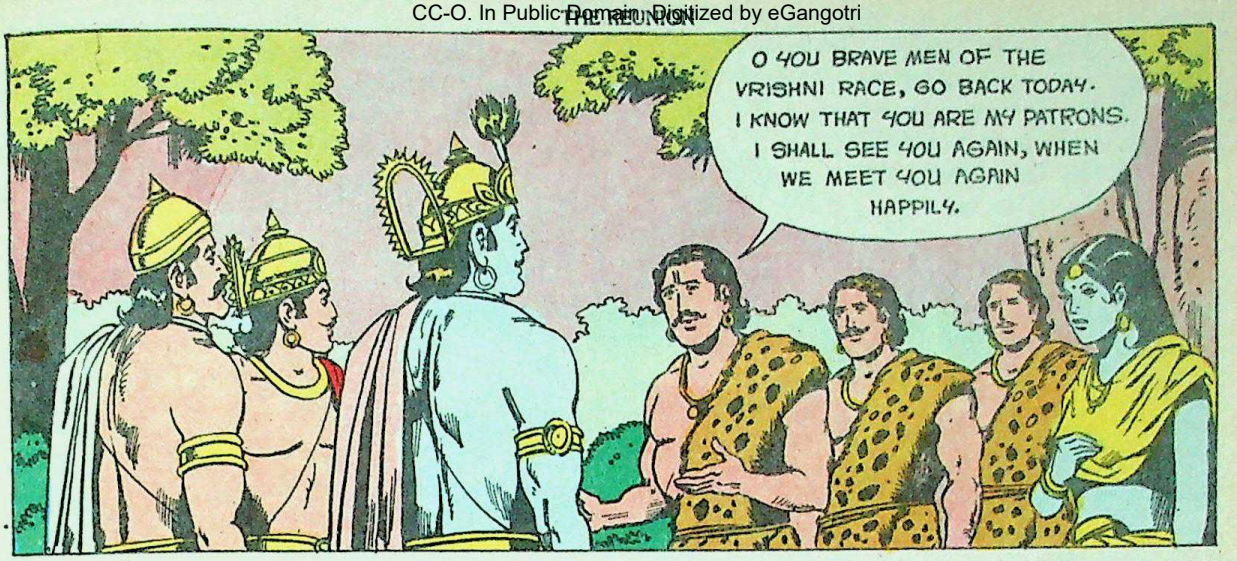

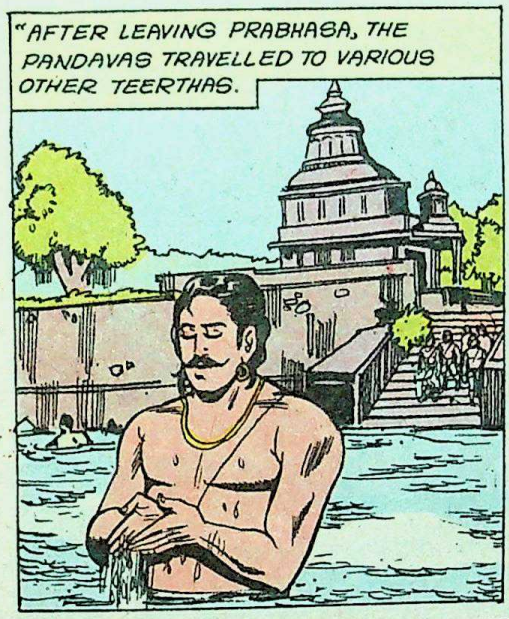

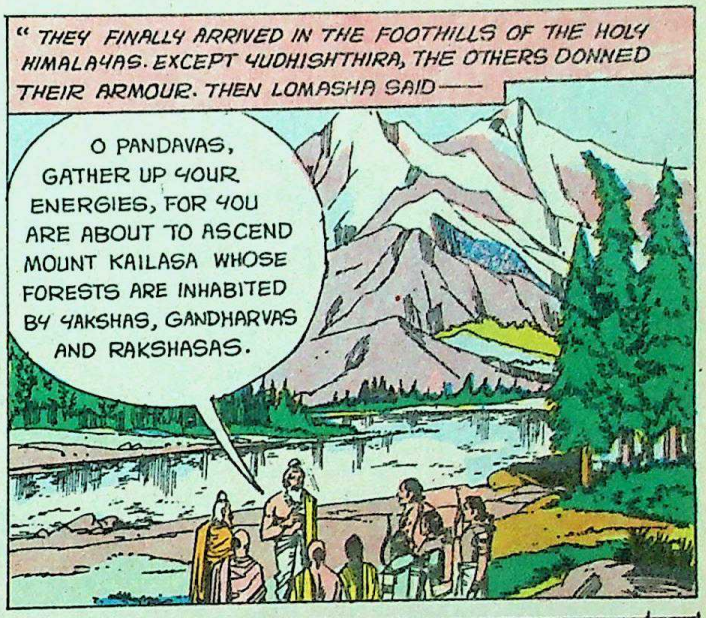

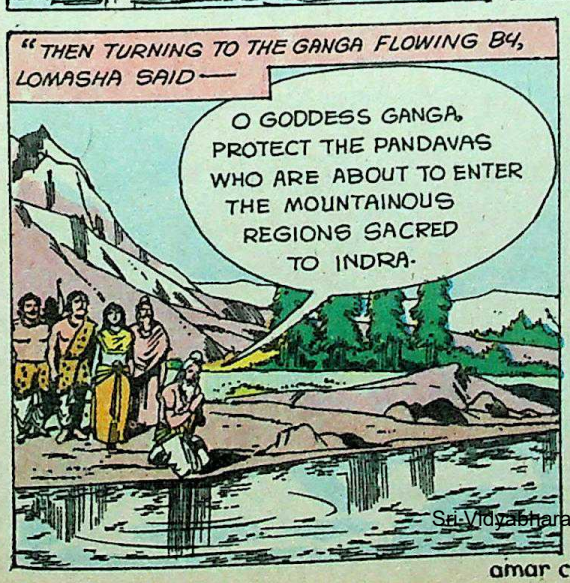

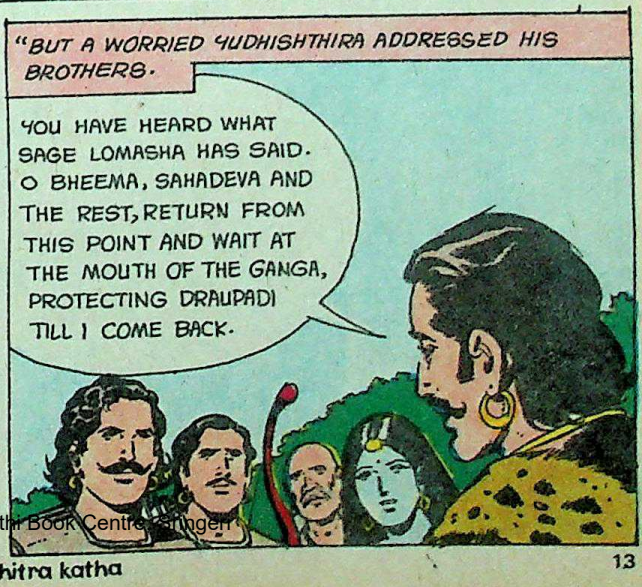

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O BHEEMA, WE HAVE GREATER PERILS AHEAD, ON OUR JOURNEY THROUGH THE SNOW-BOUND MOUNTAINS. HOW WILL DRAUPADI WITHSTAND THE HARDSHIPS OF THE ASCENT?

"AS YUDHISHTHIRA WONDERED WHAT TO DO, BHEEMA'S FACE SUDDENLY LIGHTED UP.

GHATOTKACHA*! GHATOTKACHA WILL CARRY HER. I HAVE ONLY TO THINK OF HIM AND HE WILL BE HERE.

"BHEEMA CLOSED HIS EYES AND THOUGHT OF GHATOTKACHA AND...

"...IN A FARAWAY FOREST GHATOTKACHA SUDDENLY STOOD STILL.

MY FATHER NEEDS ME. COME WITH ME.

"THE NEXT MOMENT—

FATHER, HERE I AM, READY TO DO YOUR BIDDING.

GHATOTKACHA, YOU CAN FLY ANYWHERE AT WILL. CARRY DRAUPADI AND FOLLOW US TO THE GANDHAMADANA FOREST. BUT FLY LOW SO THAT SHE DOES NOT BECOME ILL.

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* SON OF BHEEMA AND HIDIMBA, A DEMONESS — SEE MAHABHARATA VOL NO. 9

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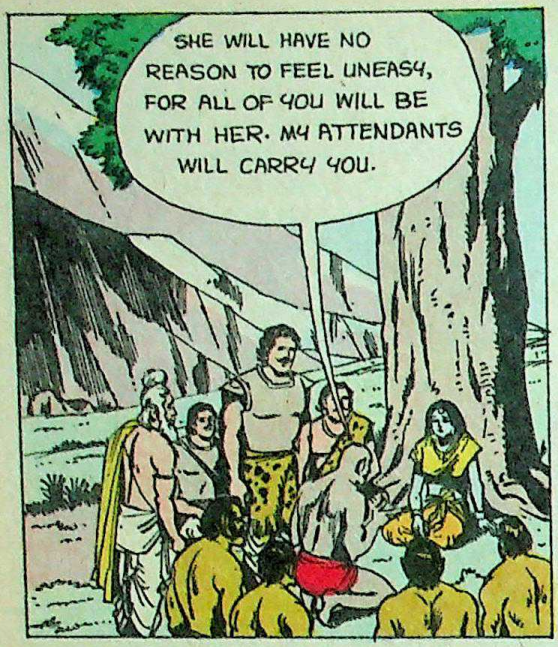

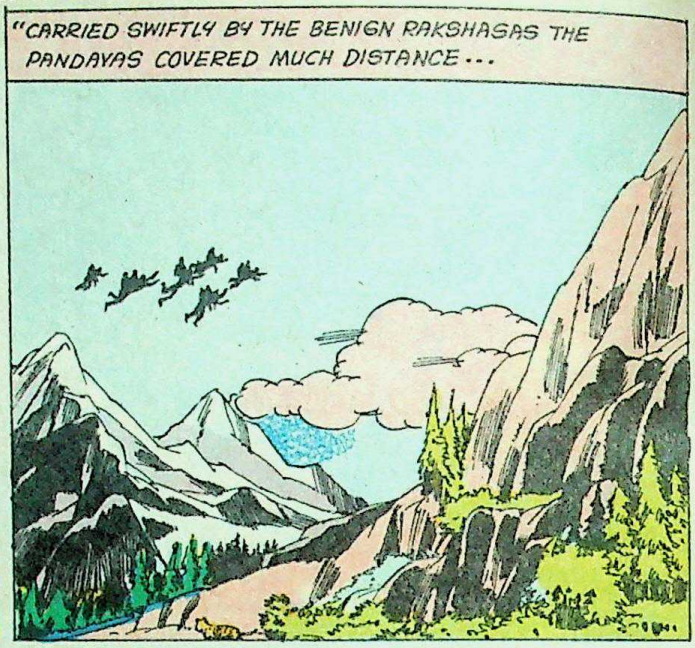

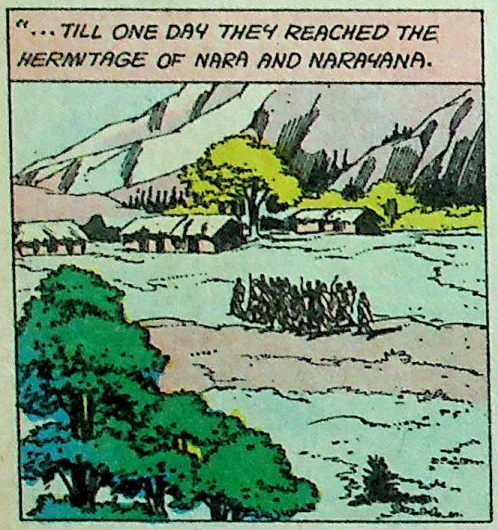

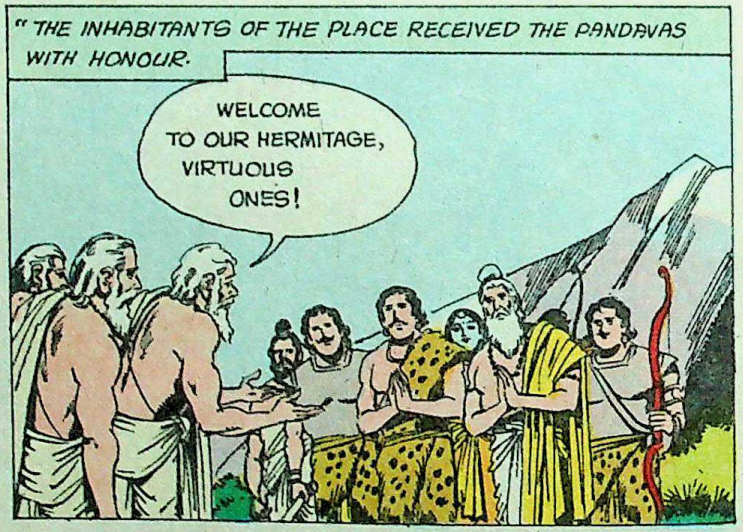

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I WILL MAKE A PRESENT OF THIS TO YUDHISHTHIRA. BUT, DEAR BHEEMA, I MUST HAVE A FEW OF THESE FLOWERS TO TAKE BACK WITH US TO THE KAMYAKA FOREST.

"SO BHEEMA, TAKING HIS BOW AND ARROWS AND MACE, SET OUT TO GRATIFY HER WISH. HE ENTERED THE GANDHAMADANA FOREST, FULL OF BEAUTIFUL TREES, ANIMALS, BIRDS AND STREAMS.

I HOPE MY BROTHERS DON'T GET ANXIOUS FOR ME.

"AS HE HURRIED THROUGH THE FOREST THE ANIMALS FLED IN FEAR AND THE BIRDS FLEW TO SAFETY.

"BUT HE WAS SUDDENLY BROUGHT TO A HALT WHEN HE SAW A MONKEY WITH A LONG TAIL LYING ON THE GROUND BLOCKING HIS WAY.*

"HE WENT A LITTLE CLOSER AND LET OUT A ROAR.

GR-R-R-R!

"THE MONKEY SIMPLY TURNED AND LOOKED LAZILY AT BHEEMA.

I AM ILL. I WAS ASLEEP AND YOU WOKE ME UP. BEING A MAN, YOU ARE WISER THAN I. YOU OUGHT TO BE MORE CONSIDERATE. WHO ARE YOU?

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* SEE AC.K NO 214 FOR DETAILS

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* HANUMAN WAS THE SON OF VAYU, THE WIND-GOD. (SEE ACK NO. 19)

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"BUT AS BHEEMA BENT DOWN TO DRINK FROM THE LAKE——

WAIT! THIS GARDEN IS KUBERA'S* FAVOURITE PLAYGROUND. MORTALS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO COME HERE.

WHO ARE YOU?

WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?

"WHEN BHEEMA EXPLAINED WHO HE WAS AND WHY HE WAS THERE——

YOU CANNOT DRINK THE WATER OF THIS LAKE OR CARRY AWAY THE FLOWERS WITHOUT KUBERA'S PERMISSION.

"AFTER A HOT EXCHANGE OF WORDS A FIGHT ENSUED IN WHICH BHEEMA KILLED OVER A HUNDRED RAKSHASAS. SEVERAL FLED...

* LORD OF THE DEMIGODS: SEE ACK NO-17

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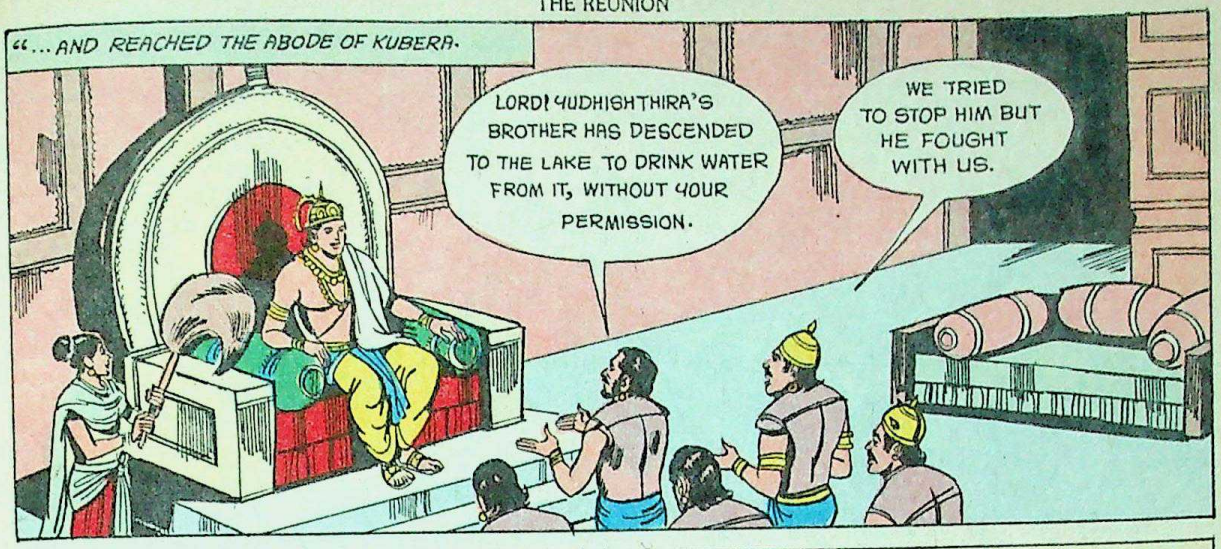

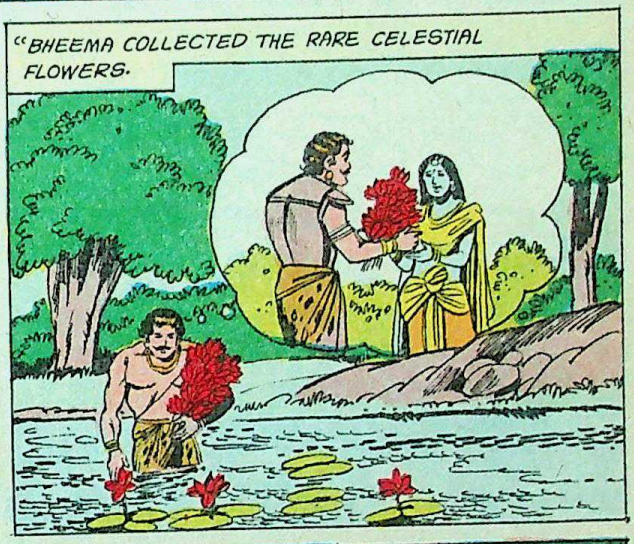

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"ONE DAY THE PANDAVAS SUDDENLY SAW A BRIGHT OBJECT ILLUMINATING THE SKY AND...

...SOON INDRA'S VEHICLE DRAWN BY A HUNDRED HORSES APPEARED IN FRONT OF THEM.

"SEATED IN THE CHARIOT DRIVEN BY MATALI WAS ARJUNA DECKED IN GARLANDS AND ORNAMENTS.

"HE ALIGHTED AND BOWED TO HIS ELDERS. AND THERE WAS MUCH REJOICING AMONG THE BROTHERS.

"AFTER MATALI HAD LEFT, ARJUNA PRESENTED TO DRAUPADI THE PRECIOUS GEMS AND ORNAMENTS THAT INDRA HAD GIVEN HIM.

"INDRA THEN DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN AND BLESSED YUDHISHTHIRA.

ONE DAY YOU WILL RULE THE EARTH.

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"AFTER INDRA DEPARTED, THE PANDAVAS QUESTIONED ARJUNA ABOUT HIS STAY IN INDRALOKA——

O ARJUNA, HAVE YOU ACQUIRED THE WEAPONS? HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO PLEASE INDRA?

"ARJUNA NARRATED TO THEM HOW HE GOT THE WEAPONS AND HOW HE HAD BEFRIENDED CHITRASENA IN INDRALOKA.

I HAVE ACQUIRED PROFICIENCY IN USING THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS AND...

"... HAVE GAINED INDRA'S CONFIDENCE.

NOW EVEN THE CELESTIALS CANNOT CONQUER YOU, LET ALONE MORTALS. THERE IS NO STRENGTH IN THE WORLD GREATER THAN YOURS AND THERE IS NO ONE TO COMPARE WITH YOU IN VALOUR.

BUT NOW, ARJUNA, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO PAY YOUR PRECEPTOR HIS FEE. I WILL ASSIGN YOU A TASK.

IF IT IS WITHIN MY POWER TO DO IT, CONSIDER IT AS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED BY ME.

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"TAKING ME TO BE INDRA, THE DANAVAS TOOK FRIGHT. THEY SHUT THE GATES OF THE CITY AND BEGAN TO ARM THEMSELVES.

THEREUPON I BLEW THE POWERFUL CONCH-SHELL — DEVADATTA — AND THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE REVERBERATIONS OF ITS SOUND.

THEN O YUDHISHTHIRA, MATALI LANDED THE CHARIOT AND THE DANAVAS MADE THEIR APPEARANCE IN THEIR THOUSANDS, DONNING DIVERSE MAIL AND CARRYING VARIOUS WEAPONS.

"THEY RUSHED AT US. OBSTRUCTING THE COURSE OF THE VEHICLE, HEMMING US ON ALL SIDES, THEY COVERED US WITH SHOWERS OF ARROWS.

"AIMING MY GANDEEVA I SHOT OUT ARROWS IN ALL DIRECTIONS. AND AS THE DANAVAS WERE DRIVEN BACK, MATALI SPED THE STEEDS, WHO TRAMPLED ON THE DEMONS.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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THEN I SEIZED INDRA'S FAVOURITE WEAPON— MADHAVA, AND HURLED IT AT THE DANAVA FORCE AND THEIR WEAPONS WERE REDUCED TO SMITHEREENS. THE NIVATAKAVACHAS RESORTED TO THEIR TRICKS OF ILLUSION IN THEIR FIGHT WITH ME.

SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A MIGHTY SHOWER OF ROCKS. BUT I CRUSHED THE ROCKS TO POWDER WITH THE HELP OF INDRA'S WEAPON.

"AND THEN WATER CAME DOWN IN HUGE TORRENTS WHICH I DRIED UP WITH THE HELP OF THE DREADFUL AND FLAMING VISHOSHANA.

"THE DANAVAS CREATED THE ILLUSION OF FIRE AND WIND AND I EXTINGUISHED THE FLAMES USING AQUEOUS APPLIANCES.

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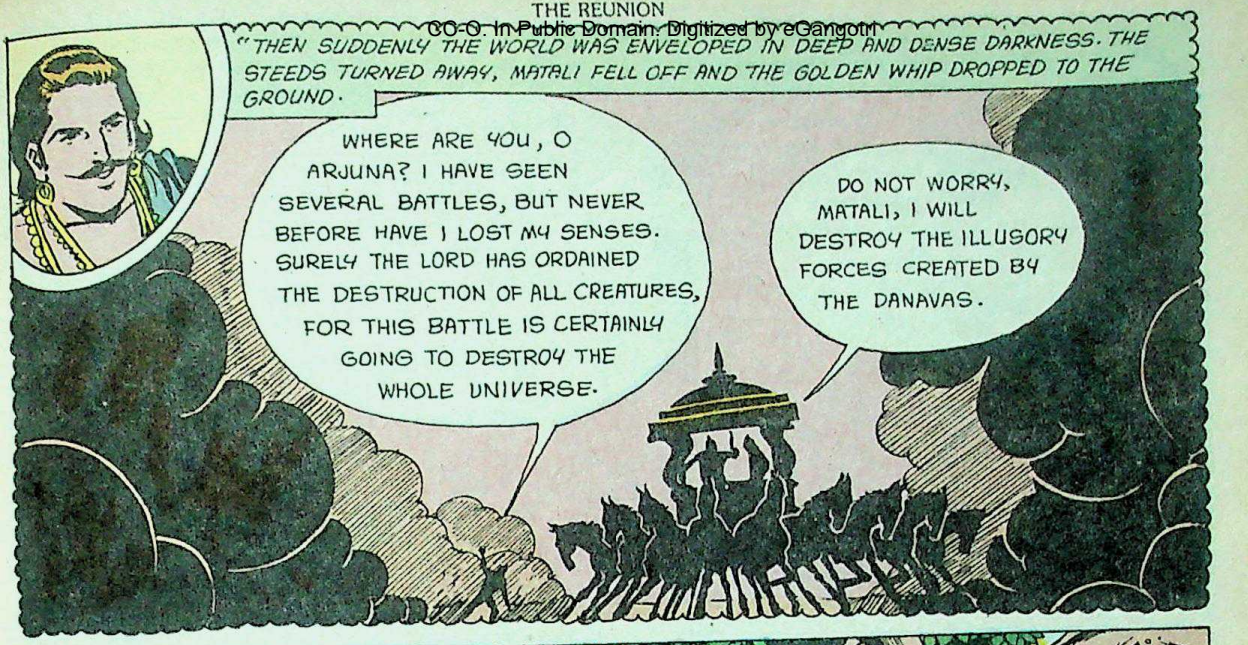

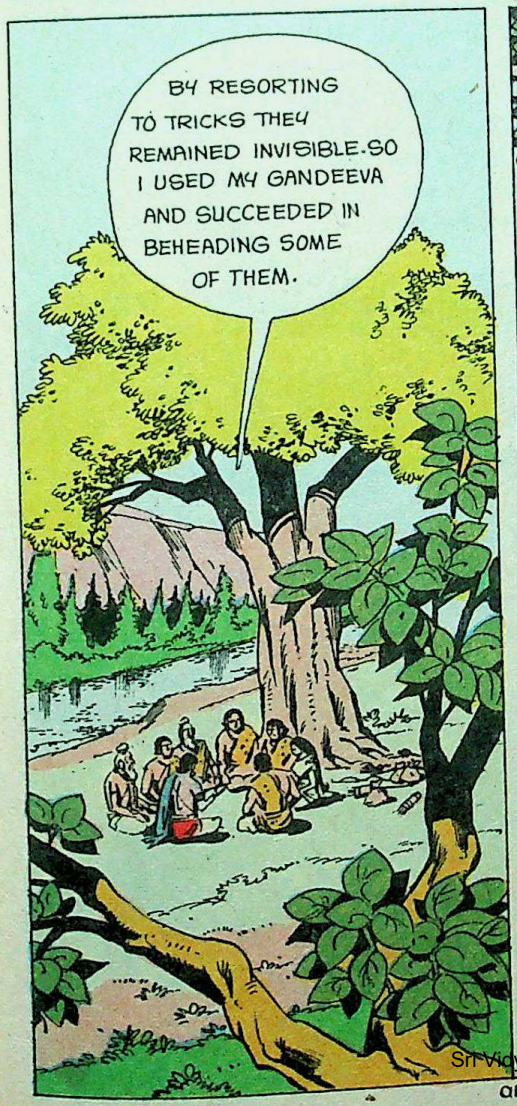

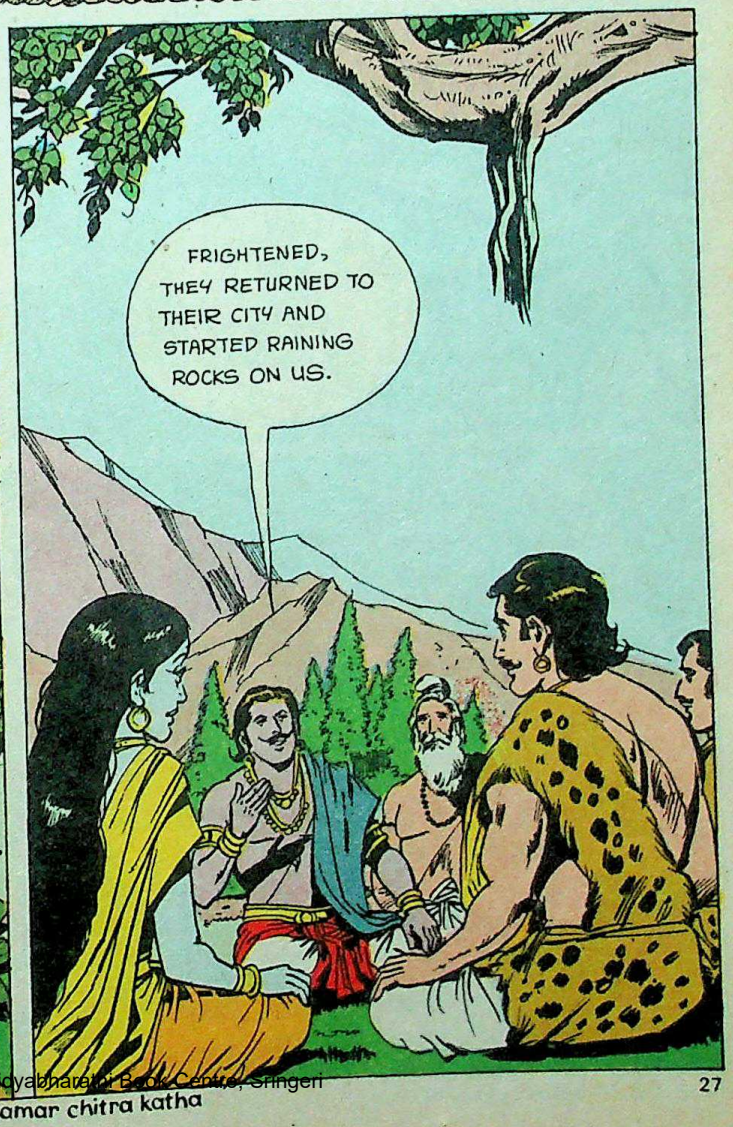

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I FELT DISTRESSED SEEING ME IN THIS STATE, MATALI SAID—

O ARJUNA, DO NOT BE AFRAID. USE THE POWERFUL THUNDERBOLT.*

"INSPIRED BY THIS, I RELEASED THE VAJRA — THE FAVOURITE WEAPON OF INDRA. THE VAJRA BROKE THE SPELL OF THE DANAVAS AND CAUSED THE DESTRUCTION OF THEM ALL.

O ARJUNA, NOT EVEN AMONG THE CELESTIALS CAN ONE SEE THE PROWESS THAT ONE SEES IN YOU.

AFTER DEFEATING THE NIVATAKAVACHAS, WE WERE RETURNING TO INDRALOKA, WHEN I SAW AN UNEARTHLY AERIAL CITY, COURSING ALONG AT WILL. MATALI EXPLAINED TO ME THAT IT WAS INHABITED BY DANAVAS...

...WHOM THE GODS WERE INCAPABLE OF DESTROYING. BRAHMA HAD DESTINED THEIR DESTRUCTION AT THE HANDS OF MORTALS.

IN THE FIGHT THAT ENSUED, I USED THE POWERFUL PASHUPATA WEAPON GIVEN TO ME BY SHIVA.

* YAJRA, INDRA'S WEAPON

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AS I DISCHARGED THE WEAPON, THOUSANDS OF STRANGE BEINGS APPEARED WIELDING WEAPONS.

THESE BEINGS FOUGHT A FEROCIOUS BATTLE WITH THE DANAVAS, ANNIHILATING THEM COMPLETELY.

ON OUR RETURN TO INDRALOKA, INDRA WAS VERY PLEASED —

WELL DONE! WELL DONE!

EVEN THE CELESTIALS CHEERED ME AND INDRA SAID —

BY THIS FEAT YOU HAVE PAID THE FEE YOU OWE THE PRECEPTOR. YOU HAVE NOW BECOME INVINCIBLE TO CELESTIALS AND DEMONS ALIKE.

ALL THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS, O ARJUNA, ARE WITH YOU, SO NO MAN ON EARTH CAN OVERPOWER YOU. AND WHEN YOU ARE ON THE FIELD BHEESHMA AND DRONA AND KRIPA AND KARNA AND SHAKUNI TOGETHER WITH OTHER KSHATRIYAS SHALL NOT AMOUNT TO A ONE-SIXTEENTH PART OF YOU.

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"HE GRANTED ME HIS IMPENETRABLE CELESTIAL MAIL. HE ALSO SET A DIADEM ON MY HEAD AND FINALLY PRESENTED ME WITH ELEGANT APPARELS AND RARE ORNAMENTS.

"THEN HE SAID —

O ARJUNA, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO LEAVE. YOUR BROTHERS ARE ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR YOU TO RETURN.

SO, O YUDHISHTHIRA, HAVE I SPENT THE LAST FIVE YEARS AND HAVE NOW ARRIVED AT THE GANDHAMADANA TO BEHOLD YOU AND MY OTHER BROTHERS.

O ARJUNA, IT IS FORTUNATE INDEED THAT YOU HAVE ACQUIRED THE WEAPONS AND ALSO THE APPRECIATION OF INDRA. TODAY I FEEL THAT WE HAVE CONQUERED ALL THE CITIES AND SUBDUED THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA. BUT ARJUNA, I AM CURIOUS TO BEHOLD THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS.

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BUT JUST AS ARJUNA BEGAN TO EXHIBIT THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS BEFORE HIS BROTHERS, THE EARTH TREMBLED, THE RIVERS BECAME TURBULENT, THE VERY MOUNTAINS CRUMBLED, THE AIR WAS HUSHED AND THE SUN SEEMED BLOTTED OUT.

"THEN THERE ARRIVED AT THE FOREST BRAHMARSHIS*, DEVARSHIS°, SIDDHAS+, MAHARSHIS⊕, RAKSHASAS AND GANDHARVAS. AND EVEN INDRA CAME THERE WITH THE LOKAPALAS AND SHIVA TOO CAME WITH HIS FOLLOWERS.

*Most venerated Rishis °Priests of the Gods +Pure and holy beings ⊕ Seven great Rishis

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"AND THEN NARADA APPEARED BEFORE THE PANDAVAS AS A CELESTIAL MESSENGER.

O ARJUNA, DO NOT DISCHARGE THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS WITHOUT REASON, FOR TO DO SO IS EVIL. EVEN WHEN USED, IT SHOULD BE FOR A GOOD CAUSE AND IN TIMES OF GREAT STRESS AND NEED.

IF THESE WEAPONS ARE NOT USED IN THE RIGHT MANNER, IT COULD CAUSE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE THREE WORLDS. SO DO NOT DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF THE WEAPONS. WHEN THERE IS A WAR YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO.

AFTER ARJUNA WAS DISSUADED FROM A DEMONSTRATION OF THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS, THE CELESTIALS AND OTHERS RETURNED TO THEIR ABODES AND THE PANDAVAS BEGAN TO DWELL CONTENTEDLY IN THE GANDHAMADANA FOREST, ALONG WITH DRAUPADI.

THUS ENDS THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.

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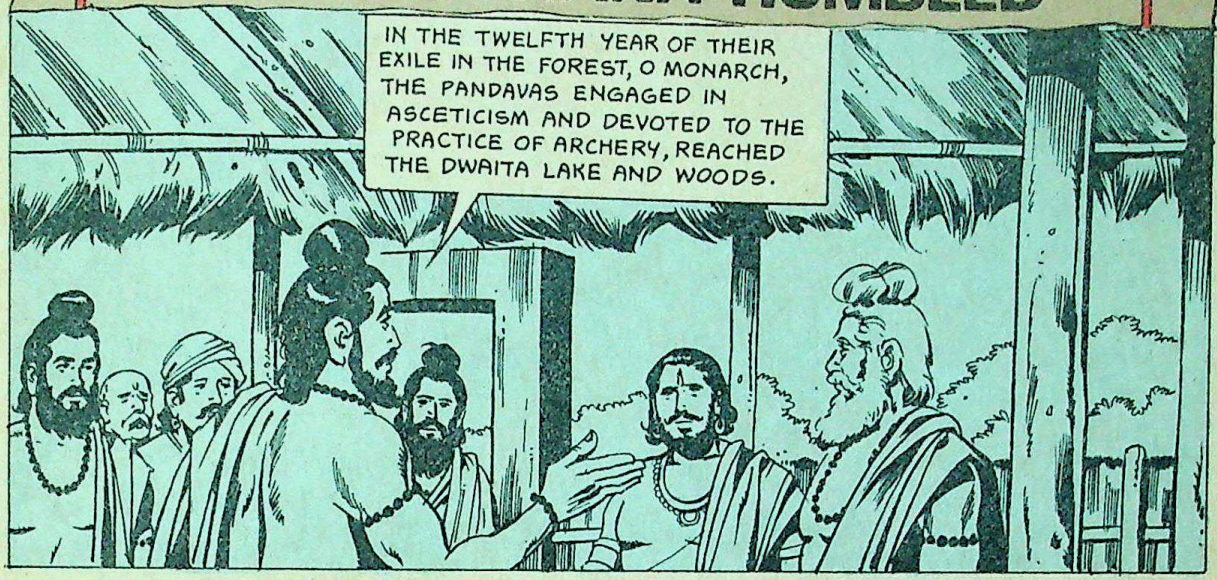
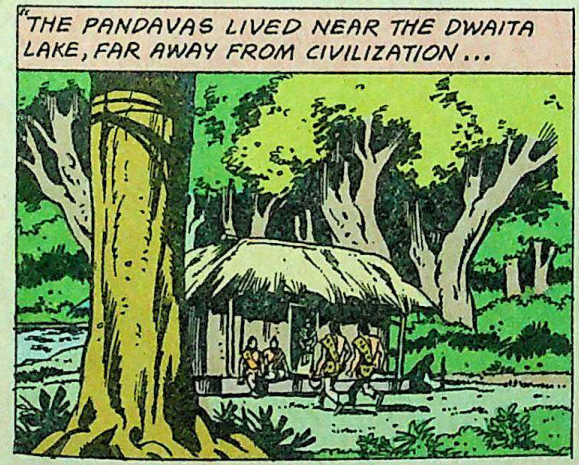
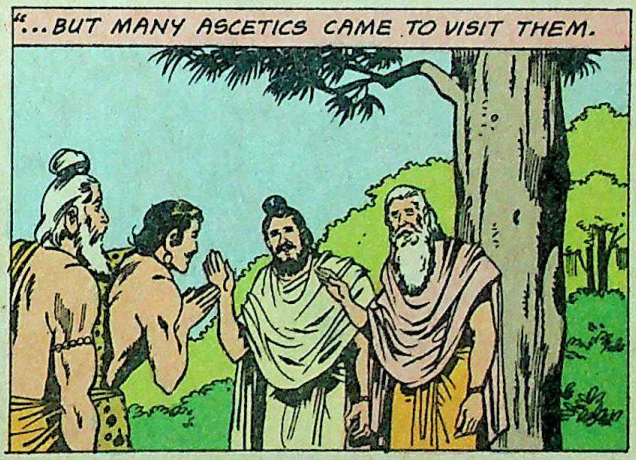
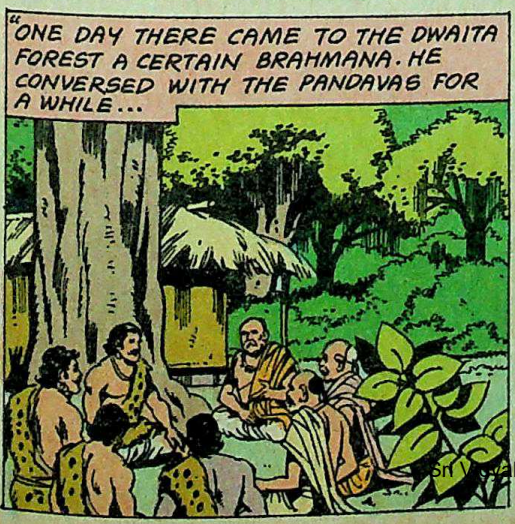
Mahabharata-23
DURYODHANA HUMBLED









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THE BRAHMANA EXPLAINED TO DHRITARASHTRA THE SORRY PLIGHT IN WHICH HE HAD FOUND THE PANDAVAS AND DRAUPADI.

AFTER HEARING THE ACCOUNT OF THE BRAHMANA, DHRITARASHTRA BECAME SAD.

ALAS, THE VIRTUOUS PANDAVAS WHO FORMERLY SLEPT ON SOFT BEDS ARE NOW BEING MADE TO SLEEP ON THE BARE EARTH.

THE MISERY EXPERIENCED BY HIS BROTHERS AND BY DRAUPADI MUST HAVE MADE ARJUNA BURN WITH ANGER.

THE CRUEL WORDS UTTERED BY DUHSHASANA AFTER THE DECEITFUL GAME OF DICE MUST HAVE SUNK DEEP INTO BHEEMA'S MIND.

THE PANDAVAS MUST BE WAITING FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO AVENGE THE INSULT.

SHAKUNI HEARD DHRITARASHTRA'S OUTBURST, AND TOLD DURYODHANA ABOUT IT.

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"WHAT HIS FATHER HAD SPOKEN FILLED DURYODHANA WITH GRIEF. SHAKUNI AND KARNA TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM.

O DURYODHANA! HAVING EXILED THE PANDAVAS BY YOUR OWN PROWESS, RULE THIS EARTH WITHOUT A RIVAL. ALL THE KINGS OF THIS LAND WILL NOW CARRY OUT YOUR COMMANDS IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY DID UNDER YUDHISHTHIRA.

"THEN KARNA SAID —

O KING, LET US GO TO THE DWAITAVANA AND LOOK AT THE SONS OF PANDU. LET US SEE THEM SHORN OF THEIR PROSPERITY, THE ONES WHO NEVER TOOK ORDERS AND WHO NEVER KNEW SUBJECTION.

WHO CAN BE A HAPPIER MAN THAN HE, WHO, IN PROSPERITY, CAN LOOK DOWN ON HIS FOES IN ADVERSITY? O KING, THE HAPPINESS THAT ONE DERIVES FROM BEHOLDING HIS FOES IN GRIEF IS GREAT...

...IT IS GREATER THAN WHAT ONE MAY DERIVE FROM THE ACQUISITION OF A SON OR IMMENSE WEALTH OR A KINGDOM.

LET YOUR WIVES DRESSED IN RICH ROBES LOOK AT THE WOEFUL DRAUPADI CLAD IN DEER-SKIN AND BARK.

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"HEARING SHAKUNI SPEAK THUS, DURYODHANA WAS VERY PLEASED, BUT WAS SOON OVERCOME BY MELANCHOLY. HE SAID—

O KARNA! I TOO HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU SAY. HOWEVER, KING DHRITARASHTRA WILL NEVER PERMIT IT, IF HE GETS TO KNOW OF OUR MOTIVES. MY FATHER REGARDS THE PANDAVAS MORE POWERFUL THAN US AND IS ALWAYS GRIEVING FOR THEM.

I CANNOT MAKE UP MY MIND AS TO WHETHER I SHOULD GO OR NOT! I WILL CERTAINLY BE PLEASED TO CAST MY EYES ON THE PANDAVAS AND DRAUPADI AS THEY PASS THEIR DAYS IN PAIN AND SORROW.

BUT FIRST WE MUST THINK OF A PLAN TO CONVINCE MY FATHER AND BHEESHMA. TAKE THE HELP OF SHAKUNI AND DUHSHASANA.

TOMORROW WHEN I AM WITH BHEESHMA IN THE PRESENCE OF MY FATHER, YOU MENTION THE PRETEXT ON WHICH WE MAY GO TO THE WOODS.

"THAT NIGHT KARNA WENT TO MEET DURYODHANA.

O KING, WE HAVE DEVISED A PLAN BY WHICH DHRITA-RASHTRA WILL SURELY ALLOW US TO GO TO DWAITAVANA.

DURYODHANA APPROVED OF THE PLAN SUGGESTED BY KARNA.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Bangalore

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"NEXT DAY, INSTRUCTED BY KARNA AND SHAKUNI, SAMANGA, A COWHERD, APPROACHED DHRITARASHTRA.

O KING, THE TIME HAS COME FOR MARKING THE CATTLE AT THE DWAITAVANA.

"THEN SHAKUNI SAID —

IT IS ALSO THE RIGHT SEASON FOR THE PRINCES TO GO HUNTING. O KING, I BESEECH YOU TO GRANT DURYODHANA PERMISSION TO GO TO THE CATTLE-STATION AT DWAITAVANA.

MY SON, IT IS INDEED PROPER THAT YOU SHOULD GO ON A DEER CHASE AS WELL AS KEEP A COUNT OF THE CATTLE...

...BUT WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE PANDAVAS ARE NOW STAYING IN THE VICINITY OF THOSE CATTLE STATIONS. SUFFERING DEFEAT AT YOUR HANDS THROUGH DECEITFUL MEANS, THEIRS HAS BEEN A LIFE OF ORDEAL IN THE FOREST.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER THEM, THEIR WRATH MAY BE AWAKENED. THEY ARE NOW ENDOWED WITH CELESTIAL WEAPONS THAT YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO MEET. SO LET MEN LOYAL TO YOU FIRST GO AND INSPECT THE CATTLE.

O KING! THE SONS OF PANDU WILL NOT GO BACK ON THEIR WORD. THEY PLEDGED IN THE MIDST OF THE ASSEMBLY THAT THEY WOULD LIVE IN THE FOREST FOR 12 YEARS. BESIDES, THE VIRTUOUS YUDHISHTHIRA WILL NEVER BE ANGRY WITH US. AND WE WILL AVOID ANY CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PANDAVAS. SO THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD OF ANY MISCONDUCT ON OUR PART.

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THUS ADDRESSED BY SHAKUNI, DHRITARASHTRA WAS PERSUADED TO GRANT PERMISSION TO DURYODHANA AND HIS COUNSELLORS TO GO TO DWAITAVANA. THEY SET OUT ACCOMPANIED BY HUNDREDS OF SOLDIERS AND OTHER CITIZENS OF HASTINAPURA AND CAMPED SIX KILOMETRES OUTSIDE THE FOREST.

"HAVING SET UP CAMP, DURYODHANA SPENT SOME TIME IN CONDUCTING A CENSUS OF THE CATTLE.

"THEN HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS CONCENTRATED ON THE GAME OF HUNTING.

"THE PANDAVAS, OBLIVIOUS OF THE INTRUDERS, NOT SO FAR AWAY FROM THE FOREST, CONTINUED WITH THEIR DAILY SACRIFICES.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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"ONE DAY SOME OF DURYODHANA'S MEN STRAYED INTO THE FOREST. SUDDENLY—

STOP! YOU CANNOT ENTER THESE WOODS. OUR KING HAS COME HERE TO SPORT AND WE WILL NOT ALLOW ANY INTRUSION HERE.

"THE MEN FROM HASTINAPURA WERE THUS FORCED TO RETURN TO THEIR CAMP.

O LORD, THE KING OF THE GANDHARVAS ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL APSARAS IS OCCUPYING THE WOODS AND HIS ATTENDANTS REFUSE US ENTRY.

"DURYODHANA AT ONCE DESPATCHED A BAND OF ABLE SOLDIERS TO SETTLE THE MATTER.

"THE SOLDIERS WENT BACK TO THE WOODS AND ADDRESSED THE GANDHARVAS.

THE MIGHTY KING DURYODHANA, SON OF DHRITARASHTRA, WILL BE HERE SOON ON A HUNT. STAND ASIDE.

"THE GANDHARVAS, HOWEVER, LAUGHED AND SAID:

YOUR FOOLISH KING MUST HAVE TAKEN LEAVE OF HIS SENSES, OR HOW ELSE WOULD HE DARE TO COMMAND US AS IF WE WERE HIS MERE SERVANTS? RETURN IMMEDIATELY OR WE WILL BE FORCED TO KILL YOU.

THUS ADDRESSED BY THE GANDHARVAS, THE KAURAVA ARMY RUSHED BACK TO DURYODHANA'S CAMP.

Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Bangalore

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"DURYODHANA WAS FILLED WITH RAGE WHEN THE MATTER WAS REPORTED TO HIM.

PUNISH THE WRETCHES WHO DARE TO DEFY ME.

"THE KURU SOLDIERS THUS MARCHED INTO DWAITAVANA DISREGARDING THE GANDHARVAS.

GO BACK!

GO BACK!

"THE GANDHARVA WARRIORS RUSHED TO THEIR KING CHITRASENA FOR ADVICE.

PUNISH THE WRETCHES FOR THEIR INSOLENCE.

"THE GANDHARVAS RETURNED IN FULL FORCE AND RUSHED AT THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS HOLDING UP THEIR WEAPONS.

"THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE OVERPOWERED.

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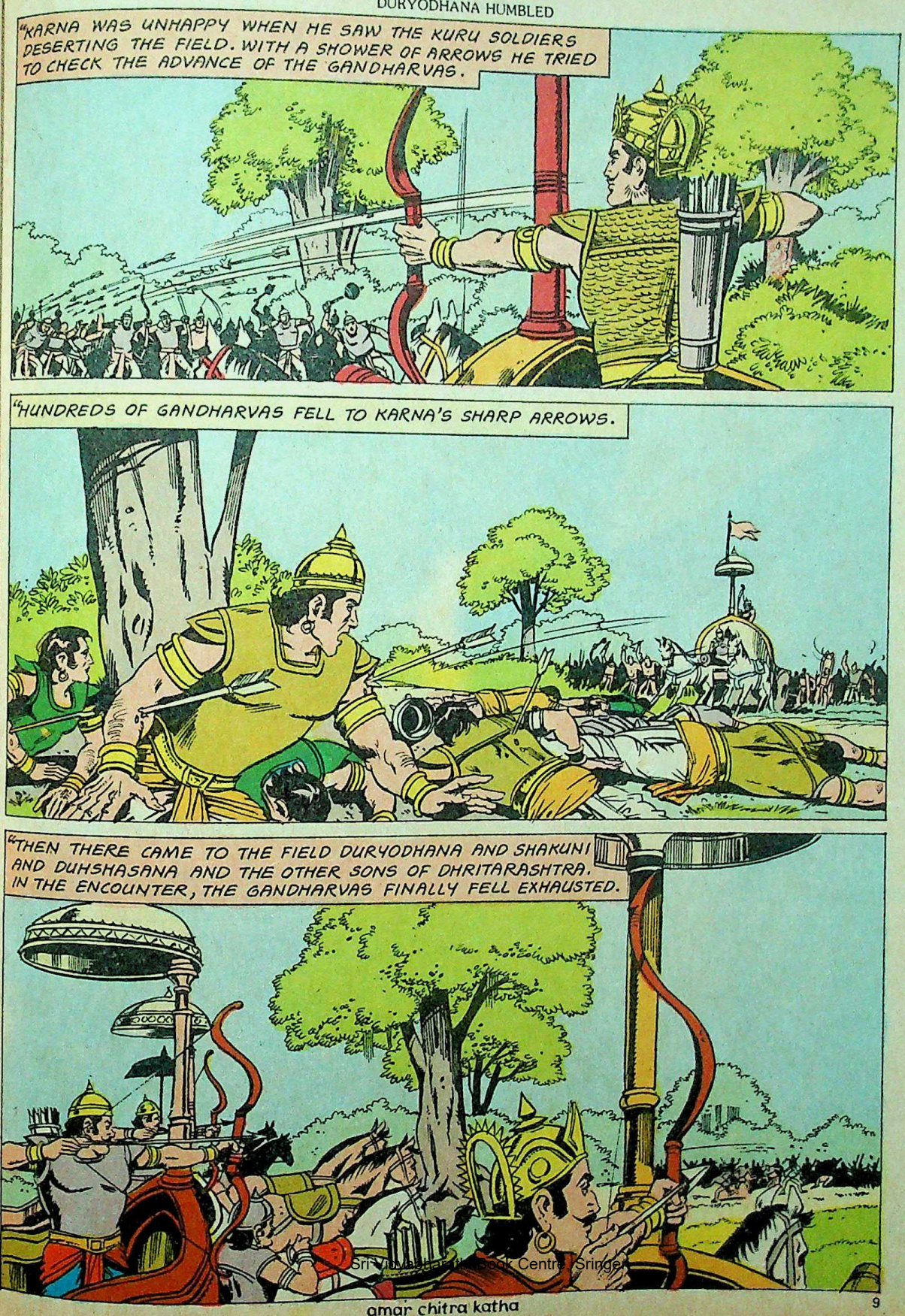

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SEEING THE GANDHARVAS YIELDING TO FEAR, CHITRASENA, ROUSED TO ANGER, SPRANG FROM HIS SEAT, AND RESOLVED TO EXTERMINATE THE KURU ARMY.

"HE CHARGED AGAINST THE KAURAVAS IN GREAT FURY.

"THE GANDHARVA KING HAD MAGIC POWERS AND HE UNLEASHED THEM ON THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS. THEY BECAME BEWITCHED AND FLED THE FIELD.

"AFTER THE KURUS HAD FLED, THE GANDHARVAS TURNED TO KARNA WHO CONTINUED TO BATTLE. THEY SURROUNDED HIM...

"...FORCED HIM TO GET OFF HIS CHARIOT AND THEN DESTROYED IT.

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"KARNA LEAPT ON TO ANOTHER CHARIOT BUT HE COULD NOT KEEP UP FOR LONG AND WITHDREW FROM THE FIELD.

"BEHOLDING ALL HIS LOYAL FOLLOWERS FLEEING, DURYODHANA WAS MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO FIGHT THE GANDHARVAS.

"BUT SOON THE GANDHARVAS SURROUNDED DURYODHANA'S CHARIOT AND FORCED HIM TO THE GROUND.

"THEN CHITRASENA RUSHED FORWARD AND SEIZED HIM.

"DURYODHANA, DUHSHASANA AND A HOST OF OTHER KAURAVAS WERE TAKEN PRISONERS BY THE GANDHARVAS.

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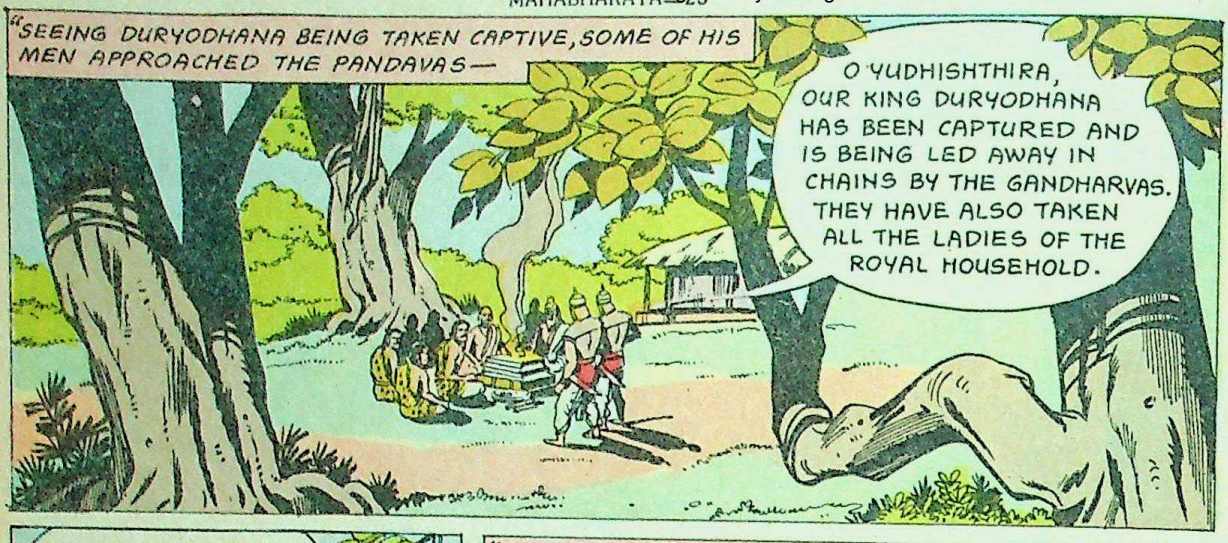

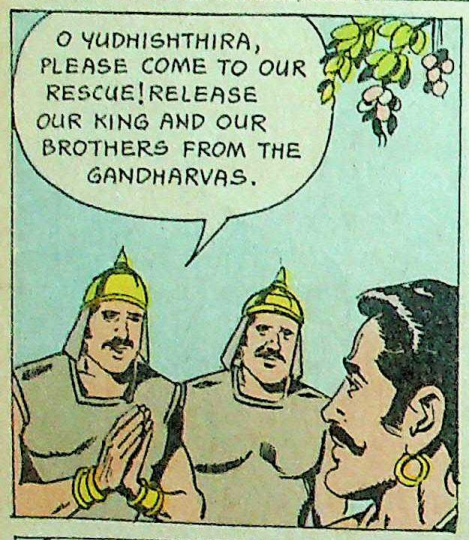

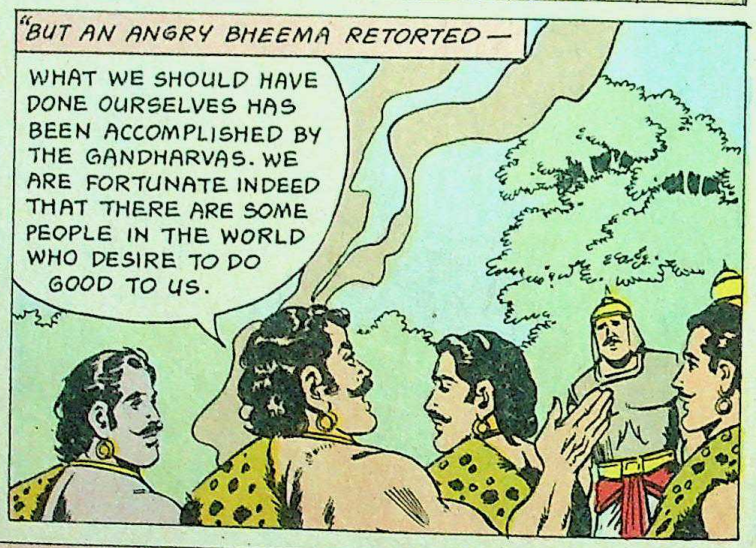

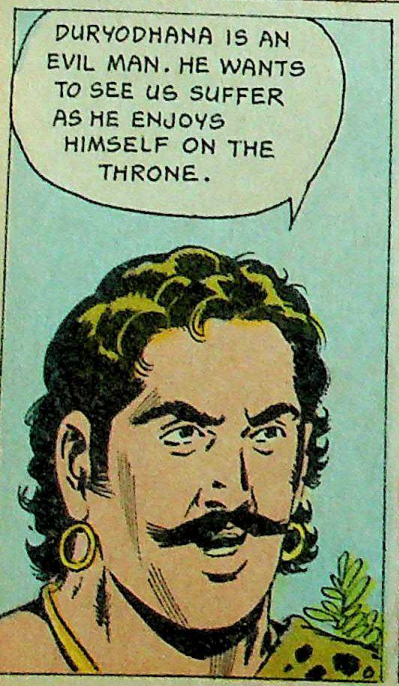

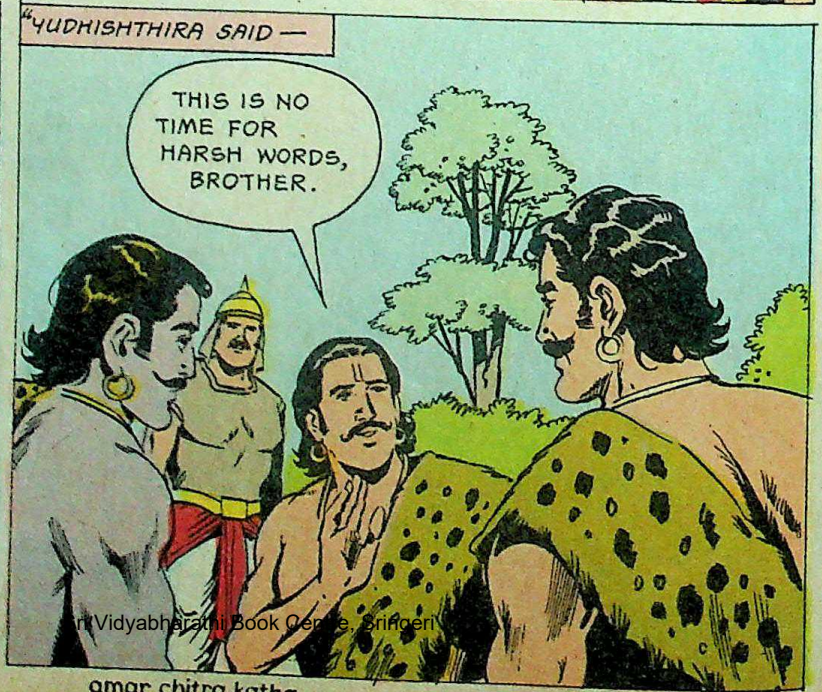

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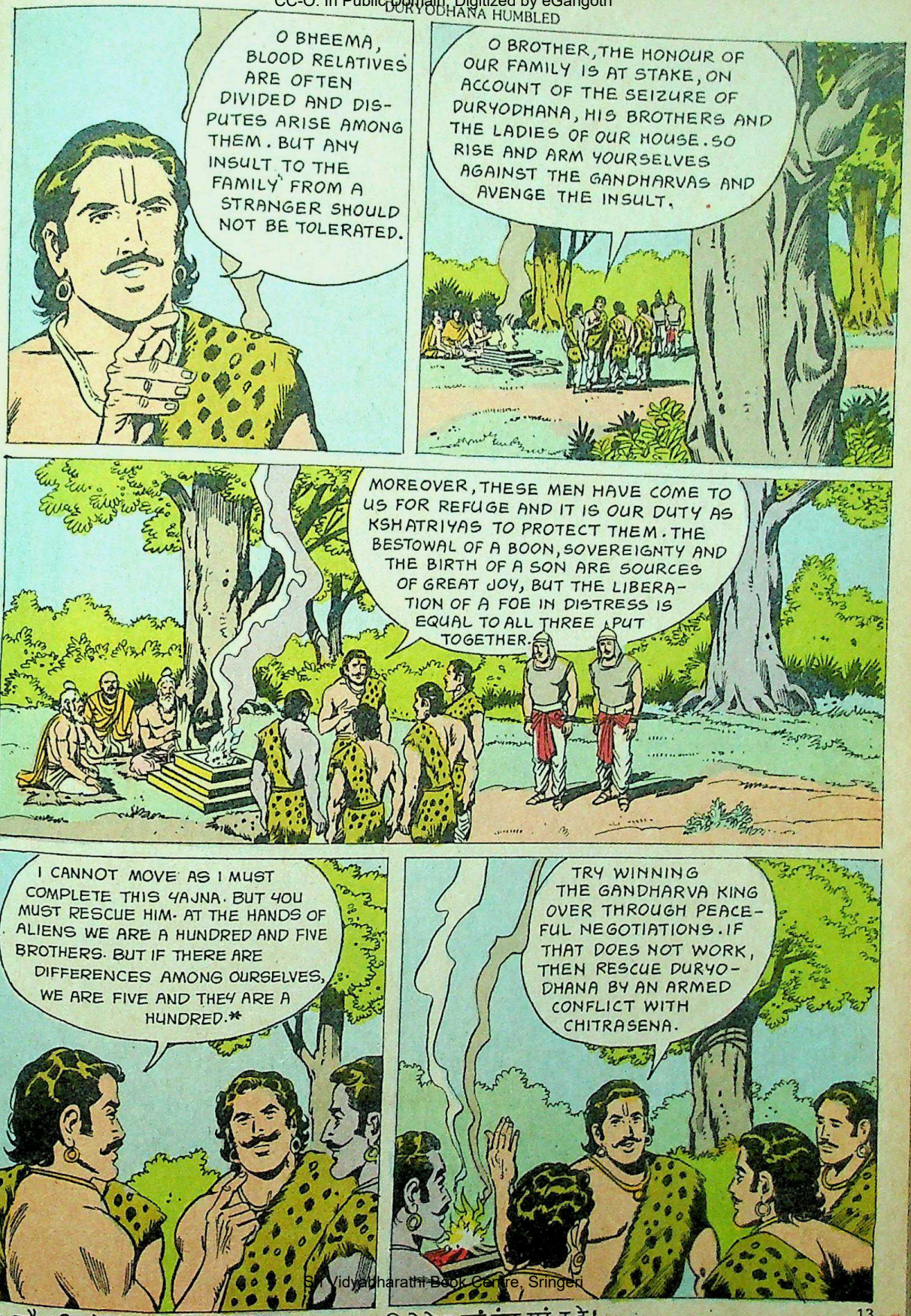

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* परैः परिभवे प्राप्ते वयं पंचोत्तरं शतम्, परस्परविरोधे तु वयं पंच शतं तु ते!

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HEARING THE WORDS OF YUDHISHTHIRA, THE PANDAVAS PREPARED THEMSELVES TO GO AND FREE DURYODHANA. ARMING THEMSELVES WITH BOWS AND ARROWS, THEY SET OUT TO ENCOUNTER THE GANDHARVAS.

AND WHEN THE PANDAVAS MET THE GANDHARVAS, ARJUNA SAID —

RELEASE MY BROTHER, KING DURYODHANA.

"BUT THE GANDHARVAS ONLY LAUGHED AND SAID —

O CHILD, THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHOSE ORDERS WE OBEY, AND HE IS OUR CHIEF. NO ONE ELSE CAN ORDER US ABOUT.

IT DOES NOT BEHOVE CHITRASENA TO ABDUCT OTHER'S WOMEN. RELEASE THEM AND THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA. OR ELSE...

"... AND ARJUNA THEN RELEASED A SHOWER OF ARROWS AT THE GANDHARVAS.

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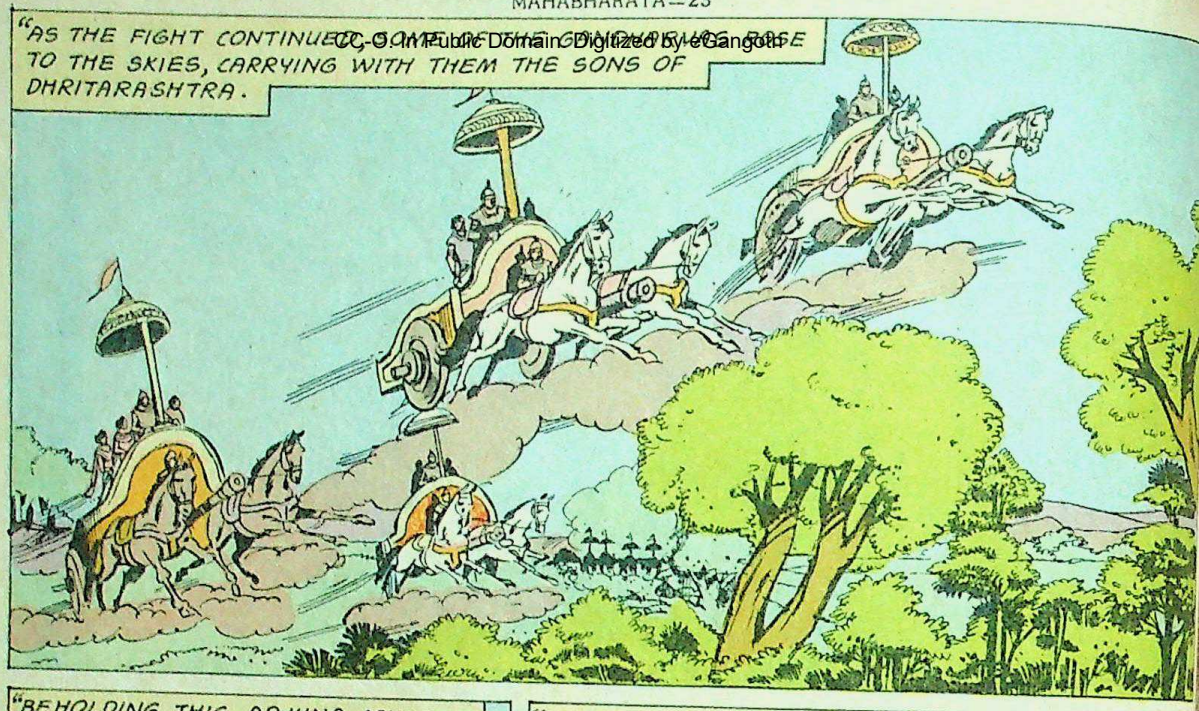

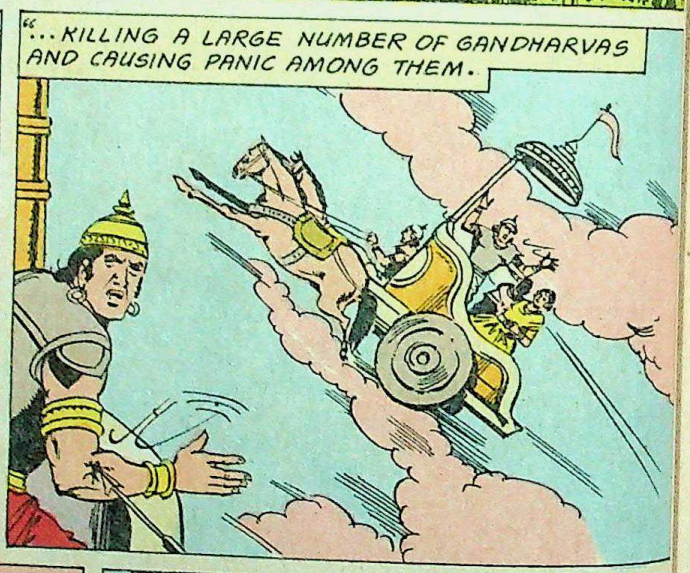

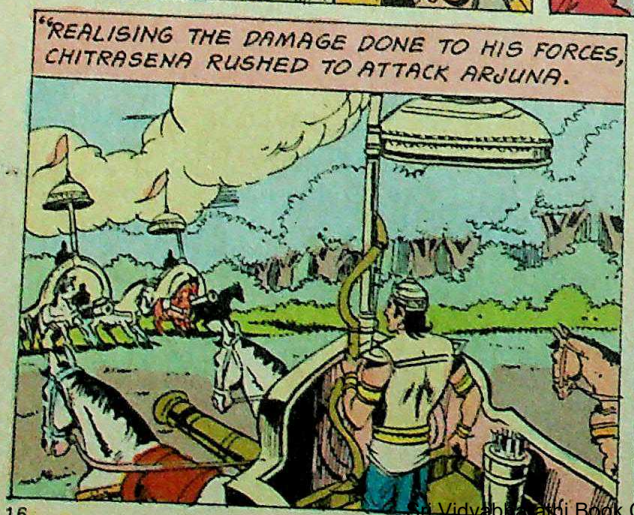

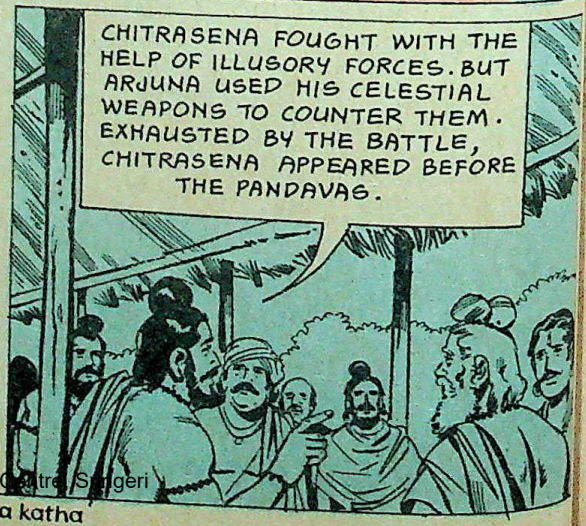

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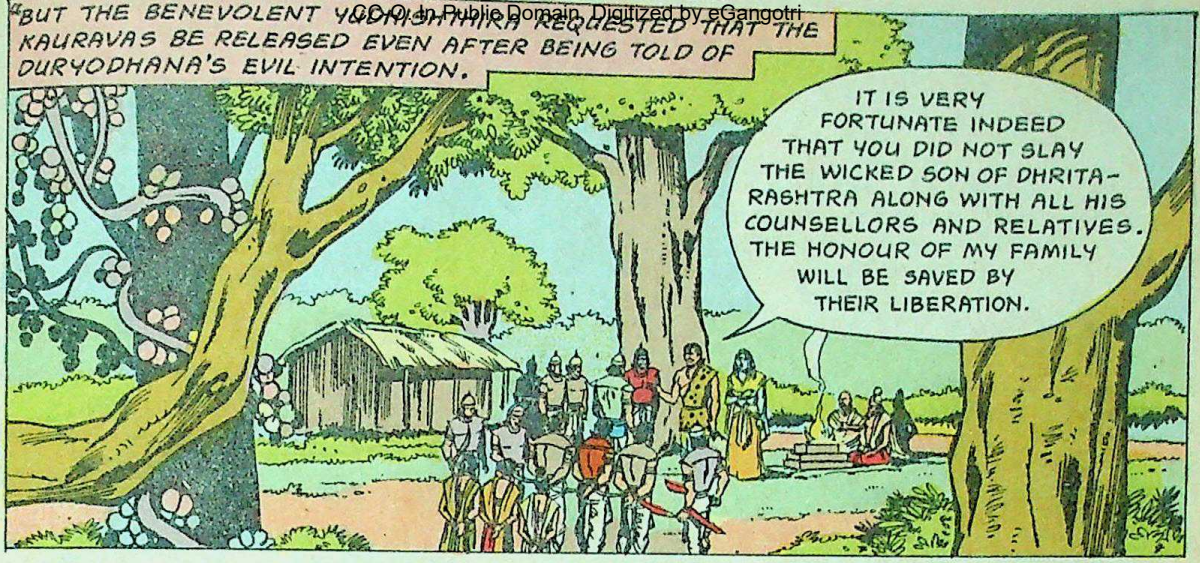

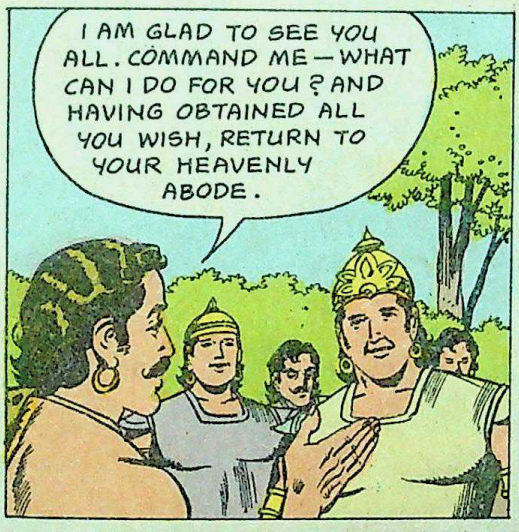

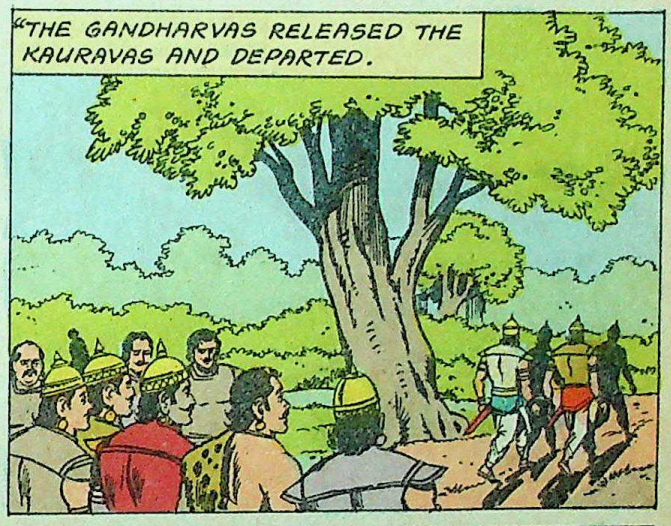

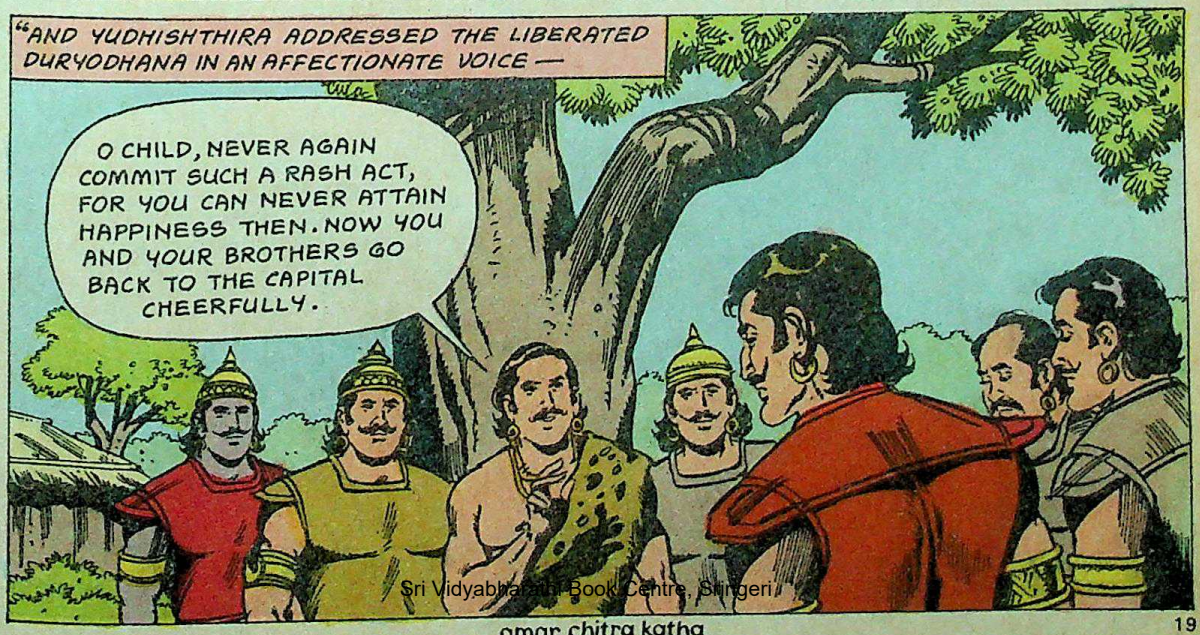

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O VAISHAMPAYANA, AFTER THE HUMILIATING DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF THE GANDHARVAS, IT MUST HAVE BEEN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT FOR DURYODHANA TO RETURN TO HIS CAPITAL.

O MONARCH, AFTER BEING DISMISSED BY YUDHISHTHIRA, DURYODHANA PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE CITY. ON THE WAY HE CAMPED NEAR A RIVER.

"THEN ONE MORNING, KARNA ARRIVED AT THE CAMP.

O DURYODHANA, IT IS FORTUNATE INDEED THAT YOU ARE ALIVE AND THAT WE HAVE MET ONCE AGAIN. BY GOOD LUCK YOU COULD VANQUISH THE GANDHARVAS WHO FOUGHT WITH MAGICAL POWERS.

TORMENTED BY THE GANDHARVAS, I MYSELF FLED THE BATTLEFIELD, UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE FURY OF THE ENEMY ANY LONGER.

BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE COME OUT UNSCATHED. O KING, WHAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED BY THIS BATTLE NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE.

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"IN A VOICE CHOKED WITH EMOTION DURYODHANA SAID —

O KARNA, YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

DURYODHANA THEN EXPLAINED TO KARNA ALL THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE AFTER THE PANDAVAS HAD DECIDED TO RESCUE HIM.

O KARNA, THE HUMILIATION I FELT AS I WAS RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF YUDHISHTHIRA! FAR BETTER IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR ME TO HAVE DIED IN THE BATTLE THAN TO HAVE BEEN SAVED AS A RESULT OF A FAVOUR DONE BY THE PANDAVAS.

NOW LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. I WILL STAY HERE FORGOING ALL FOOD WHILE ALL OF YOU RETURN HOME. I HAVE DONE A HIGHLY IMPROPER AND WICKED ACT FOR WHICH I WILL PERISH BY STARVING.

AND IF I RETURN NOW AFTER BEING INSULTED BY MY FOES, I WILL BE A SOURCE OF SORROW TO MY FRIENDS.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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"THEN TURNING TO DUHSHASANA, DURYODHANA SAID —

O DUHSHASANA, RETURN TO HASTINAPURA AND RULE IN MY PLACE. CHERISH YOUR SUPERIORS, GIVE CHARITY TO BRAHMANAS, GIVE REFUGE TO FRIENDS AND DEFEND THE KINGDOM.

"DUHSHASANA WAS SO MOVED BY GRIEF THAT HE FELL AT HIS BROTHER'S FEET.

RELENT, O KING, THIS WILL NEVER BE. THE EARTH MAY SPLIT, THE HEAVEN MAY BREAK INTO PIECES, THE SUN MAY CAST OFF HIS SPLENDOUR, BUT I CANNOT RULE IN YOUR PLACE.

"NOW WEEPING INCONSOLABLY DUHSHASANA SAID —

RELENT, O KING, YOU ALONE SHALL BE KING FOR A HUNDRED YEARS.

"BEHOLDING THE TWO BROTHERS WEEPING THUS, KARNA SAID —

O KURU PRINCES, WHY DO YOU YIELD TO SORROW LIKE ORDINARY MEN? MERE WEEPING CAN NEVER EASE A MAN'S GRIEF.

THE PANDAVAS ONLY DID THEIR DUTY BY LIBERATING YOU. THEY LIVE IN YOUR DOMINION AND SO THEY HAVE TO BE AGREEABLE TO YOU.

O KING, COME BACK TO HASTINAPURA. IF YOU DECIDE TO KILL YOURSELF BY FORGOING FOOD, YOU WILL BE THE OBJECT OF LAUGHTER AMONG OTHER KINGS.

Sri Vidyabhavan Book Centre, Sangrur

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"SHAKUNI CONSOLED DURYODHANA.

KARNA IS RIGHT. WHY DO YOU WISH TO FORGO THE WEALTH I HAVE WON FOR YOU FROM THE PANDAVAS?

"AFTER HEARING ALL THAT HIS FRIENDS AND BROTHERS HAD TO SAY, DURYODHANA ANSWERED WITH SORROW.

I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH VIRTUE, WEALTH, FRIENDSHIP, AFFLUENCE, SOVEREIGNTY AND PLEASURES. DO NOT COME IN THE WAY OF MY RESOLVE, BUT LEAVE ME ALONE. I AM FIRMLY RESOLVED TO CAST AWAY MY LIFE BY FORGOING FOOD. RETURN TO THE CITY AND TREAT MY SUPERIORS THERE RESPECTFULLY.

"THEN, CLAD IN RAGS, HE SPREAD KUSHA GRASS ON THE EARTH AND PREPARED HIMSELF TO OBSERVE THE HIGHEST VOW OF LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE. HE PRAYED AND WORSHIPPED IN SILENCE.

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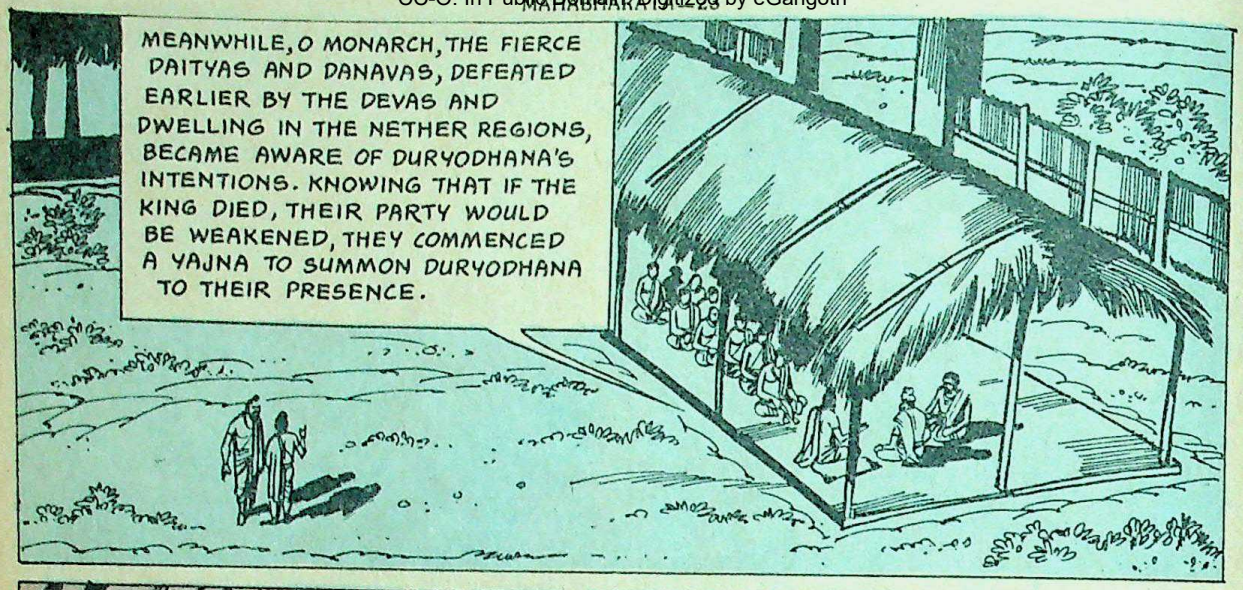

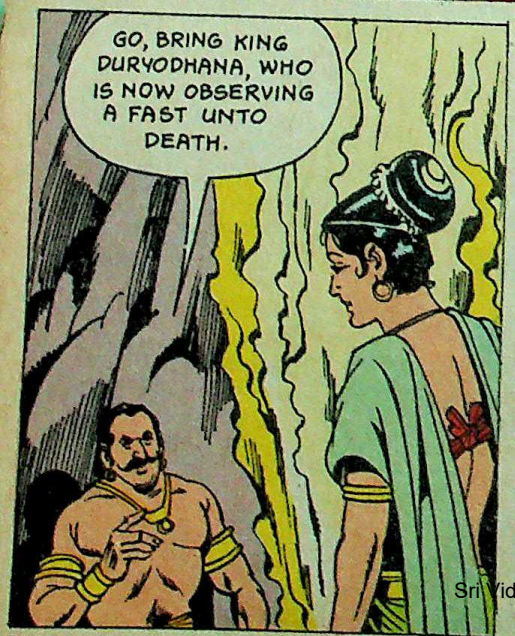

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"THE DEITY TOOK DURYODHANA TO THE NETHER REGIONS WHERE THE DANAVAS WERE EAGERLY AWAITING HER RETURN.

O KING, WHY HAVE YOU UNDERTAKEN SUCH A RASH ACT?

O DURYODHANA, YOU ARE OF CELESTIAL ORIGIN, THE CREATION OF MAHESHWARA AND HIS GODDESS. AND WE HAVE OBTAINED YOU BY ASCETIC AUSTERITIES FROM MAHESHWARA.

GRIEVE NOT ANY MORE, FOR THERE ARE MANY DANAVAS BORN ON THIS EARTH TO HELP YOU IN DESTROYING YOUR FOES. THE SONS OF PANDU WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH THESE MIGHTY DANAVAS.

WE HAVE ALSO SETTLED THE MEANS FOR SLAYING ARJUNA. THE SOUL OF THE SLAIN NARAKA HAS ASSUMED THE FORM OF KARNA AND HE WILL SLAY ARJUNA.

WE ALSO KNOW THAT INDRA, DESIROUS OF SAVING ARJUNA, WILL IN DISGUISE TAKE AWAY FROM KARNA HIS EAR-RINGS AND COAT OF MAIL. THEREFORE WE HAVE APPOINTED HUNDREDS OF SAMSAPTAKAS* TO PROTECT HIM.

GO, O KING, AND RULE THE EARTH. THOU ART OUR REFUGE AS THE PANDAVAS ARE THE REFUGE OF THE GODS. GO, ATTAIN VICTORY.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

* SOLDIERS THAT HAVE SWORN TO CONQUER OR DIE. A FULL ARMY OF THESE SOLDIERS WAS OWNED BY KRISHNA, WHO GAVE THEM TO DURYODHANA TO FIGHT FOR HIM.

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"THE DEITY THEN CARRIED DURYODHANA BACK TO THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD BEEN MEDITATING.

I SHALL DEFEAT THE PANDAVAS IN BATTLE.

"THE NEXT MORNING KARNA APPROACHED DURYODHANA AGAIN.

O KING, HAS THE SIGHT OF ARJUNA'S PROWESS POSSESSED YOU WITH FRIGHT? I PROMISE YOU I WILL SLAY ARJUNA IN BATTLE AND BRING THE SONS OF PANDU UNDER YOUR SUBJECTION.

"HEARING KARNA'S FIRM RESOLVE AND REMEMBERING THE WORDS OF THE DANAVAS, DURYODHANA ROSE...

"...AND THEY RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA.

Sri Vidyaranya Pustaka Bhandara, Sringeri

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"DURYODHANA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA. HE MET CRITICISM, NOT PRAISE.

O CHILD, I TOLD YOU BEFORE YOU SET OUT, THAT THE JOURNEY DID NOT PLEASE ME. YET YOU WENT. AND AS A CONSEQUENCE YOU WERE TAKEN CAPTIVE AND HAD TO BE FREED BY THE PANDAVAS. YET YOU ARE NOT ASHAMED.

YOU HAVE WITNESSED THE MIGHT OF THE PANDAVAS AND YOUR STRENGTH IS NOT EVEN A FOURTH OF IT.

O DURYODHANA, THEREFORE, FOR THE WELFARE OF THE RACE, CONCLUDE PEACE WITH THE VALIANT SONS OF PANDU.

"ON HEARING THIS, DURYODHANA SAILED OUT OF THE ROOM WITH SHAKUNI...

"...LEAVING BHEESHMA WHO HUNG HIS HEAD IN SHAME.

Sri Vidyabhavan Book Centre, Sringeri

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"DURYODHANA THEN DECIDED TO CONSULT HIS COUNSELLORS.

WE MUST DISCUSS TODAY WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE AND ALSO WHAT WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO ME.

"KARNA SAID —

O DURYODHANA, BHEESHMA ALWAYS FINDS FAULT WITH US AND PRAISES THE PANDAVAS. BECAUSE OF THE ILL-WILL HE BEARS TOWARDS YOU, HE HATES ME TOO.

SO, O KING, IF YOU PERMIT ME, I WILL CONQUER THE EARTH SINGLE-HANDED.

WHAT THE FOUR PANDAVAS DID TOGETHER, I WILL DO SINGLE-HANDED. BHEESHMA WILL SEE IT.

O KARNA, YOUR CONCERN FOR MY WELFARE I REGARD AS A FAVOUR. GO AND SUBDUE OUR ENEMIES. MY BLESSINGS ARE WITH YOU.

"AND ON AN AUSPICIOUS DAY AND HOUR, KARNA SET OUT TO FULFIL HIS PROMISE.

Sri Vidyabharati Book Centre,

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"WITH A LARGE ARMY AT HIS DISPOSAL, KARNA SET OUT TO CONQUER THE WORLD. HE BEGAN BY SUBJUGATING KING DRUPADA, AND THEN CONQUERED ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE NORTH, EAST, SOUTH AND WEST.

Sri Vidyabharathi Foundation-Chitra Katha Collection

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"WHEN A VICTORIOUS KARNA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA, HE WAS RECEIVED WITH HONOUR.

O KARNA, WHAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME, NOT EVEN DRONA OR KRIPA OR BHEESHMA HAS BEEN ABLE TO DO. WITHOUT DOUBT NEITHER THE PANDAVAS NOR ANY OTHER KING IS ANY MATCH FOR YOU IN VALOUR.

BUT NOW I WISH TO PERFORM THE MIGHTY RAJASOOYA YAJNA WHICH THE PANDAVAS PERFORMED.

O KING, NOW THAT ALL THE RULERS OF THE EARTH HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UNDER YOUR SUBJECTION, SUMMON THE PRIESTS AND CONDUCT THE SACRIFICE.

"BUT WHEN THE BRAHMANAS WERE SENT FOR —

O KING, DHRITA-RASHTRA WHO IS YOUR ELDER IS STILL LIVING, SO YOU CANNOT PERFORM THE RAJASOOYA.

HOWEVER THERE IS ANOTHER GREAT SACRIFICE—THE VAISHNAVA —WHICH YOU CAN PERFORM. OTHER THAN VISHNU NO ONE HAS PERFORMED THIS SACRIFICE WHICH IS EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE TO THE RAJASOOYA.

DURYODHANA AGREED TO THE VAISHNAVA SACRIFICE AND GAVE ORDERS FOR ITS PREPARATION. BRAHMANAS FROM FAR AND WIDE WERE INVITED. THE KING ALSO ORDERED A MESSENGER TO GO AND INVITE THE PANDAVAS FOR THE OCCASION.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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"DURYODHANA'S MESSENGER CONVEYED THE INVITATION TO THE PANDAVAS IN THE FOREST. BUT YUDHISHTHIRA SAID —

DURYODHANA IS INDEED LUCKY TO BE PERFORMING THE VAISHNAVA. WE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE ACCEPTED THE INVITATION, BUT WE CANNOT GO TO HASTINAPURA AS WE ARE OBSERVING A VOW.

"BUT BHEEMA THUNDERED —

TELL KING DURYODHANA THAT I SHALL ATTEND THAT SACRIFICE IN WHICH THE WRATH OF THE PANDAVAS SHALL FUEL THE FLAMES OF THE WAR IN WHICH HE WILL BE DESTROYED.

"BACK IN HASTINAPURA PREPARATIONS FOR THE SACRIFICE WERE IN FULL SWING.

Sri Vidyaranyabharathi Book Central, Sringeri

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"THE CITIZENS OF HASTINAPURA WERE OVERJOYED.

THIS SACRIFICE HAS SURPASSED ALL OTHERS.

"AND AT THE ROYAL PALACE, KARNA ADDRESSED DURYODHANA —

O KING, THE MIGHTY VAISHNAVA YAJNA HAS COME TO AN END. BUT ONCE WE HAVE DEFEATED THE PANDAVAS WE WILL PERFORM THE RAJASOOYA.

AND HERE I TAKE A VOW THAT AS LONG AS I DON'T SLAY ARJUNA, I SHALL NOT ALLOW ANY ONE TO WASH MY FEET. NOR SHALL I TASTE MEAT OR DRINK ANY WINE.

THE PANDAVAS GOT TO HEAR ABOUT KARNA'S VOW AND DECIDED TO LEAVE THE WOODS OF DWAITAVANA. AND MEANWHILE, O MONARCH, DURYODHANA CONTINUED TO RULE THE EARTH ALONG WITH HIS HEROIC BROTHERS, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM DRONA, KRIPA, BHEESHMA AND KARNA.

AND THUS ENDS THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.

Kalpathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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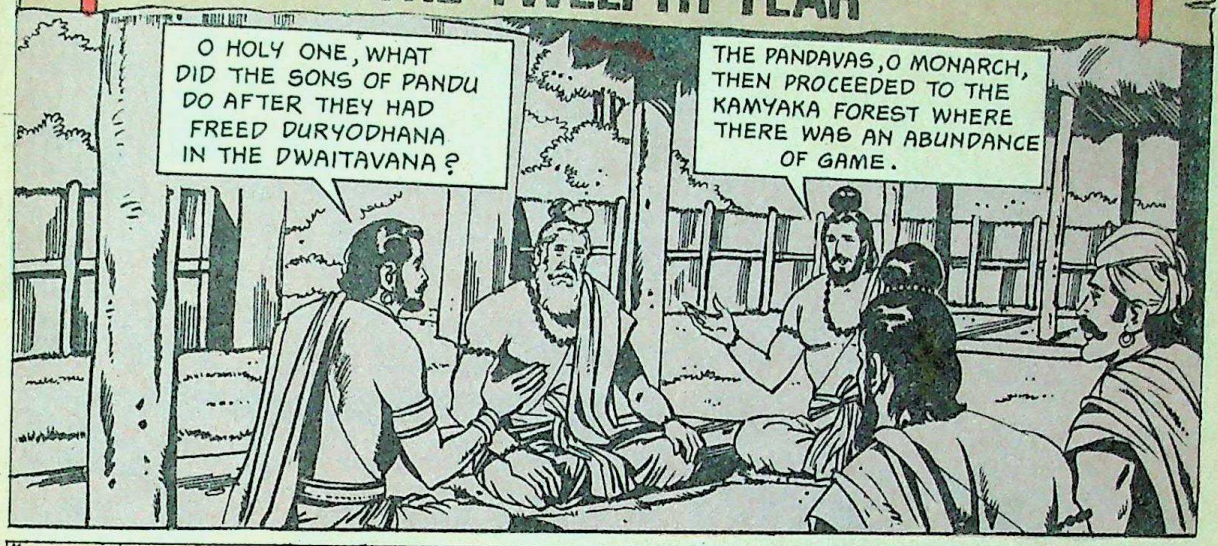
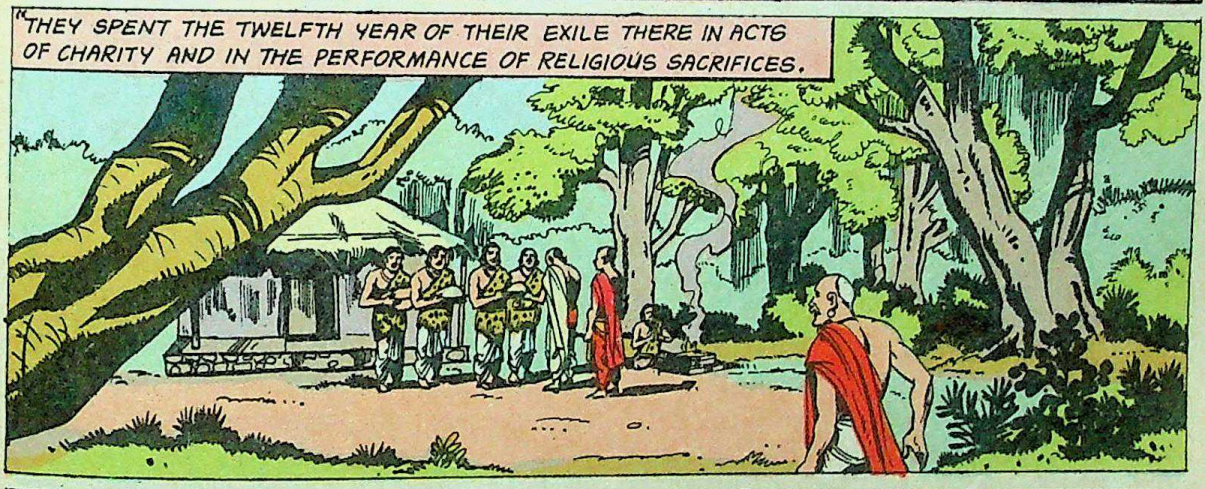
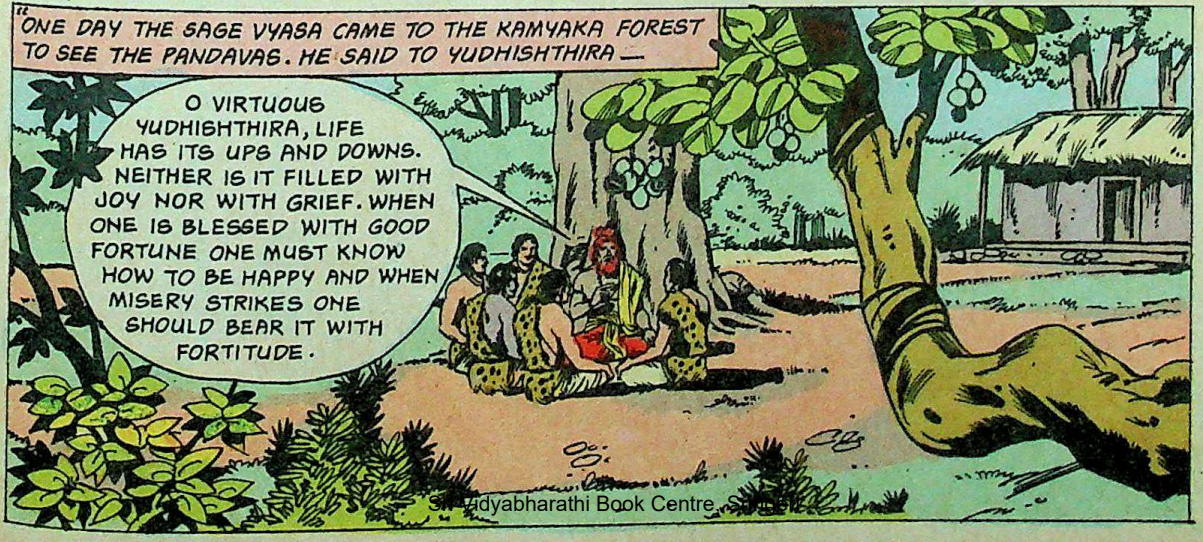
Mahabharata-24

THE TWELFTH YEAR







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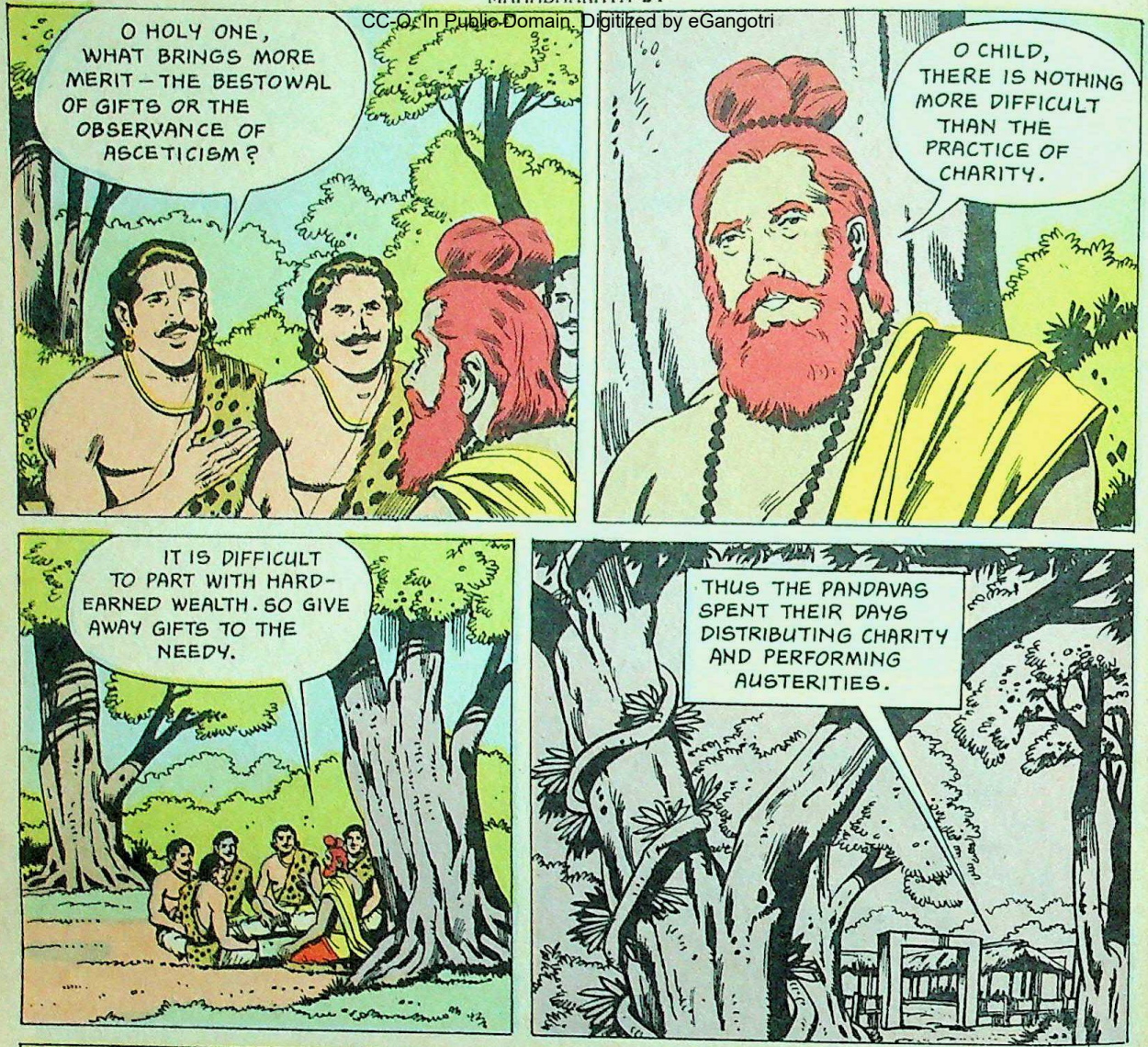

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* SEE ACK – 19 (PLATE)
** THE FOOD FROM THIS THALI WAS INEXHAUSTIBLE AT EACH MEAL TILL DRAUPADI HAD EATEN.

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"BUT THE PANDAVAS BEING HAPPY IN EXILE, FURTHER FILLED DURYODHANA WITH ENVY.

DURVASA, THE ILL TEMPERED SAGE, WILL SOON BE HERE. I COULD TURN HIM AGAINST THE PANDAVAS.

"AS EXPECTED, DURVASA CAME ONE DAY WITH HUNDREDS OF HIS FOLLOWERS TO HASTINAPURA.

"DURYODHANA RECEIVED HIM COURTEOUSLY AND LOOKED AFTER HIS EVERY NEED.

GIVE ME SOME FOOD QUICKLY.

"DURYODHANA FED THE SAGE AND HIS FOLLOWERS. PLEASED WITH HIS LAVISH HOSPITALITY, DURVASA SAID —

O KING, I WISH TO GRANT YOU A BOON.

DURYODHANA SAID —

THE GREAT KING YUDHISHTHIRA IS NOW LIVING IN THE FOREST. O SAGE, GO WITH YOUR DISCIPLES AND SEEK HIS HOSPITALITY. BUT GO AFTER DRAUPADI HAS FINISHED HER MEAL.

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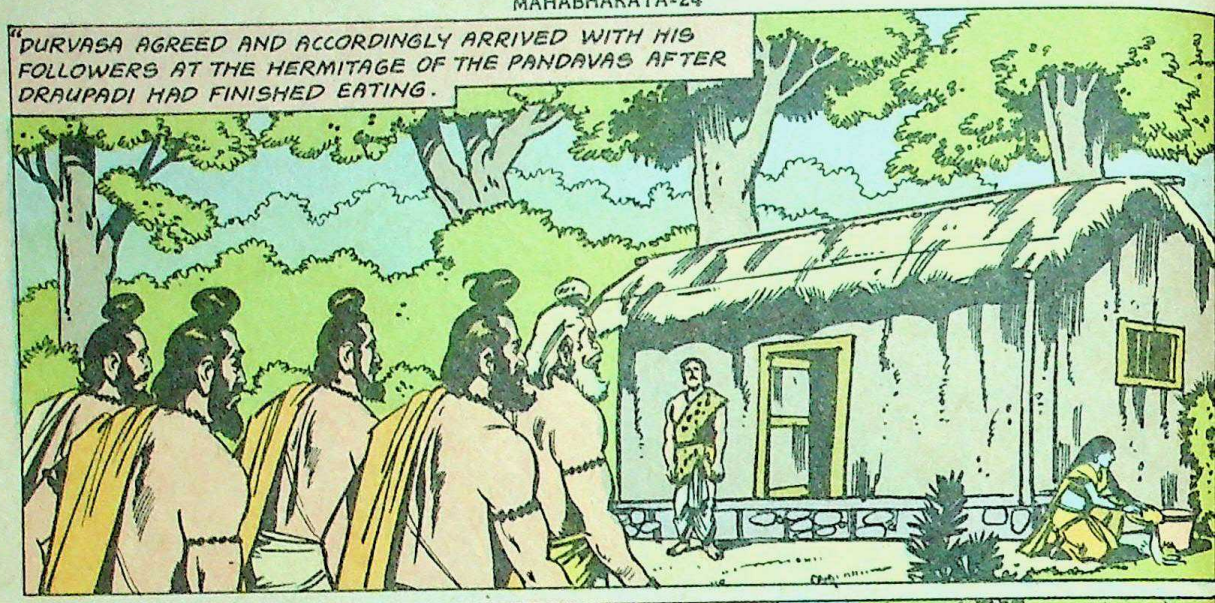

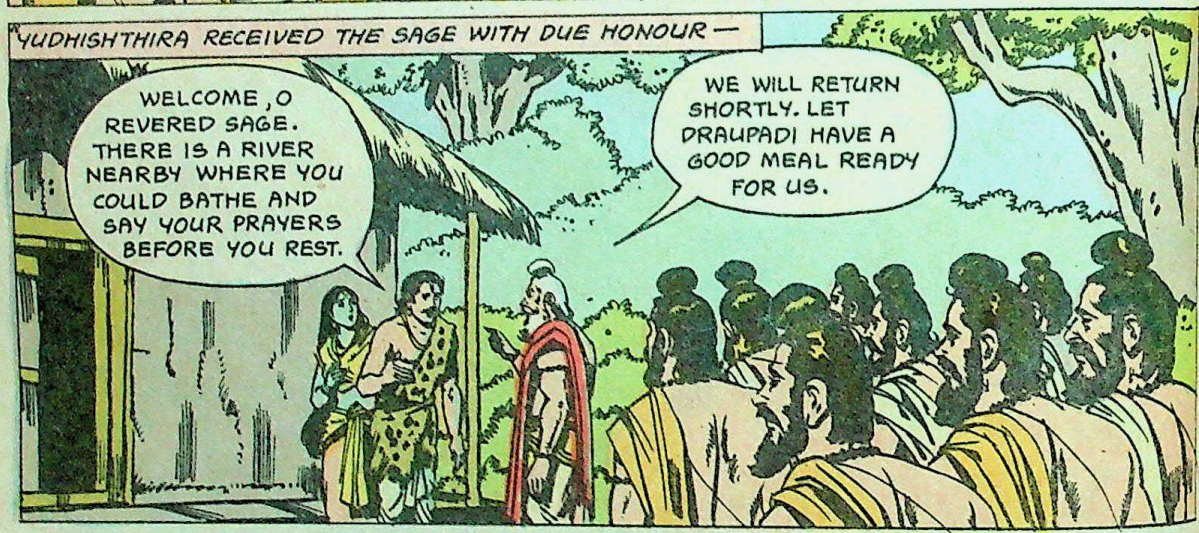

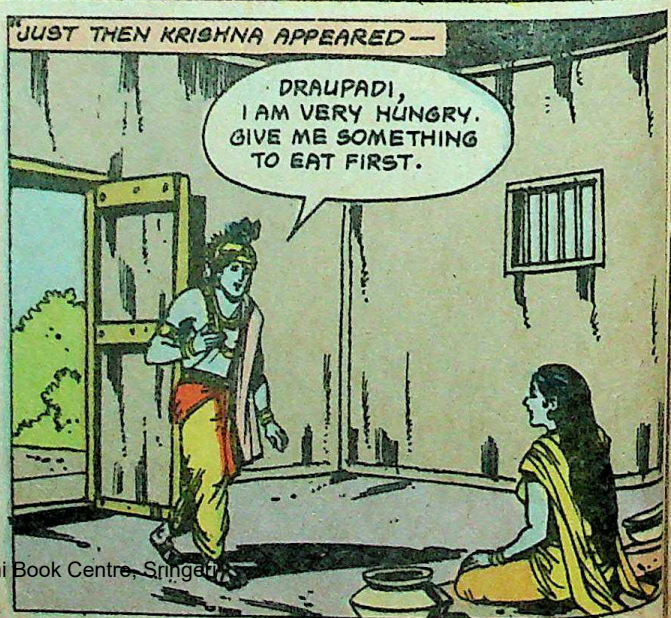

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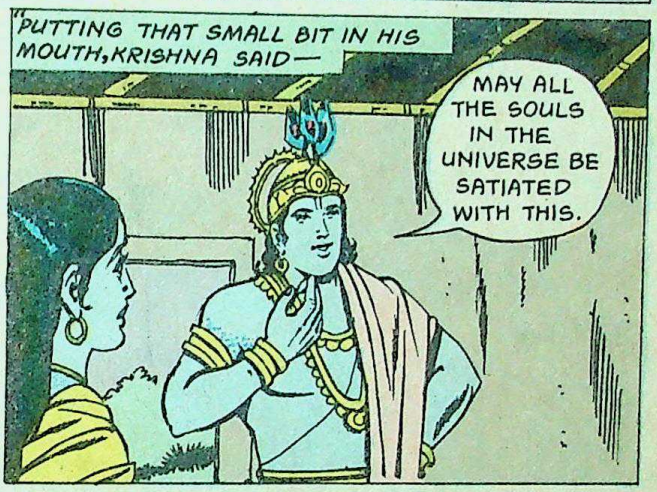

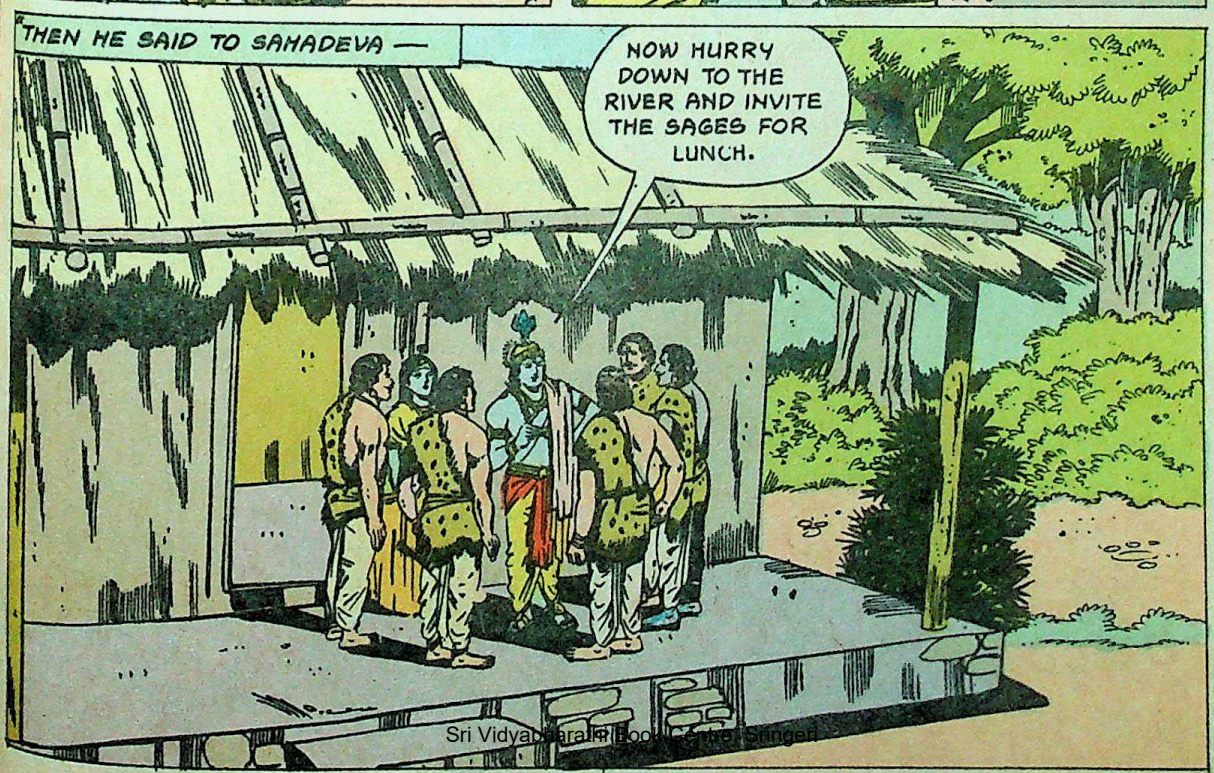

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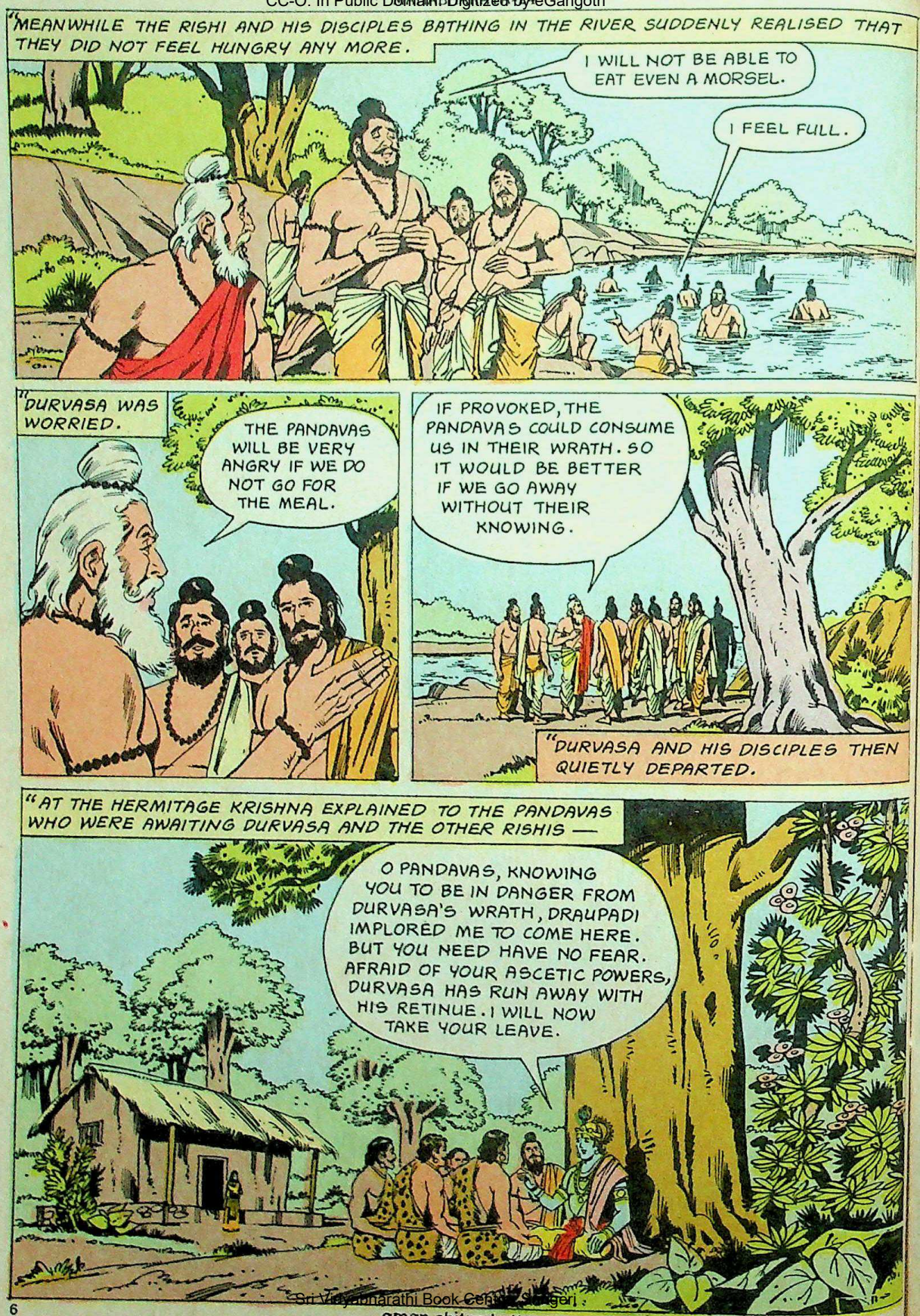

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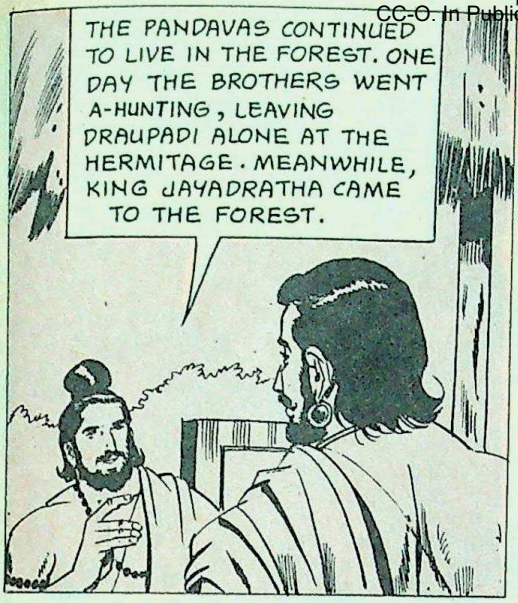

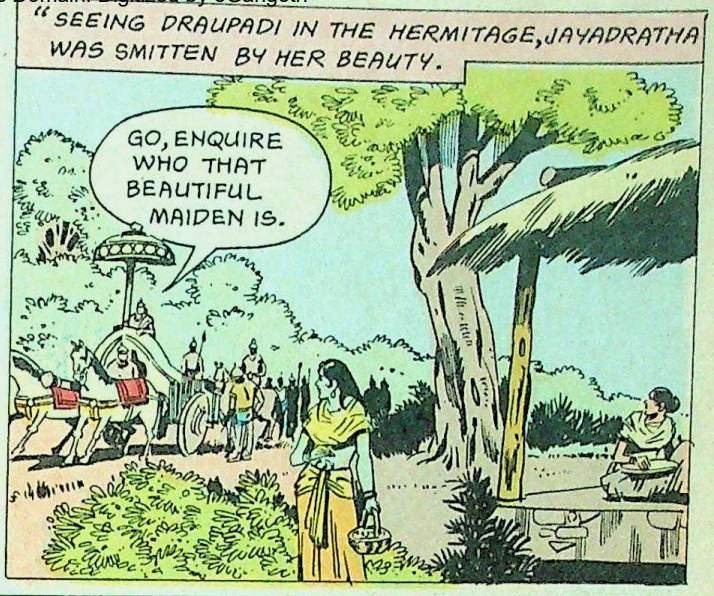

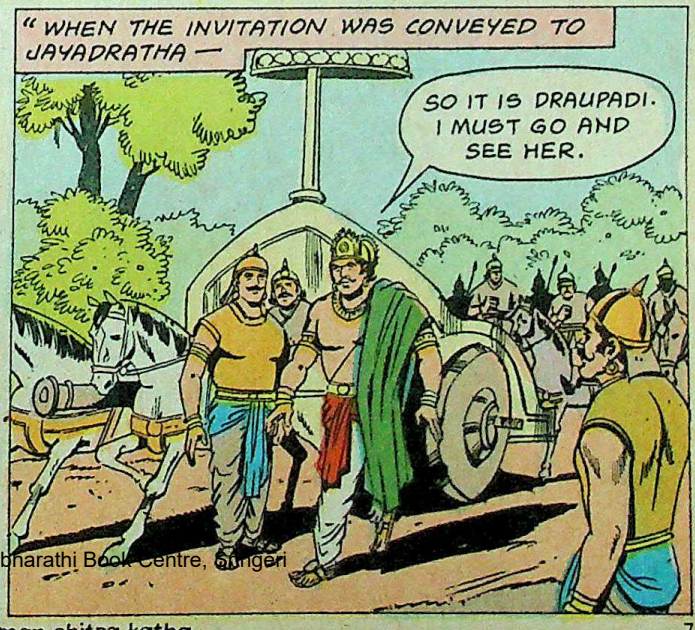

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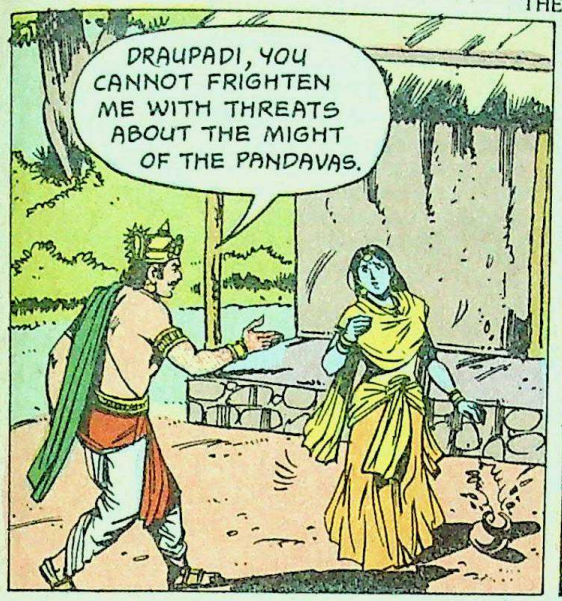

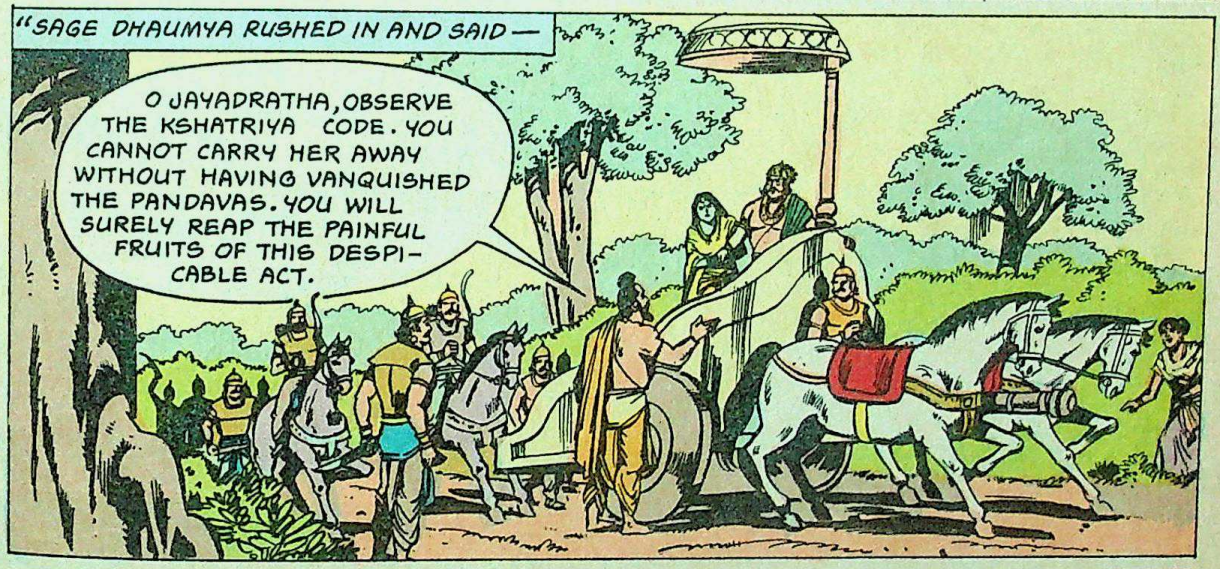

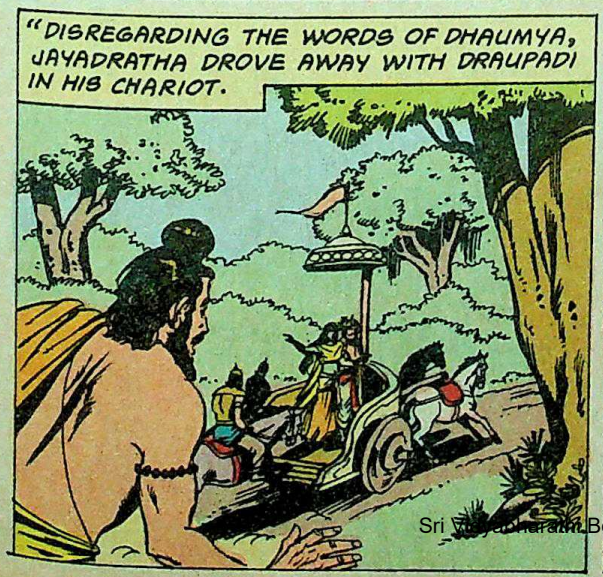

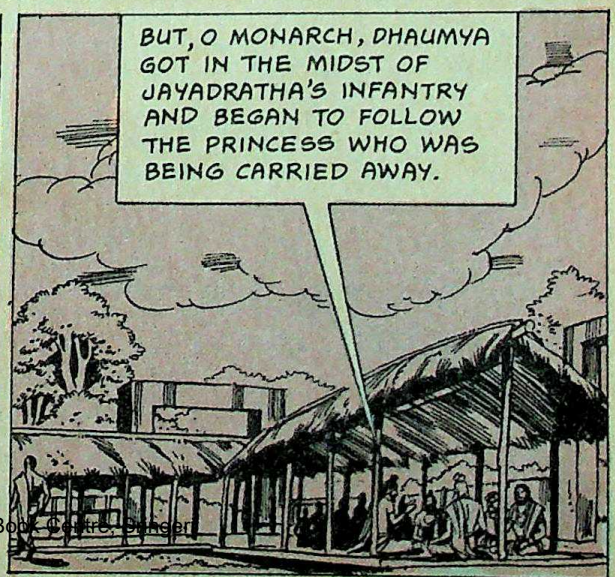

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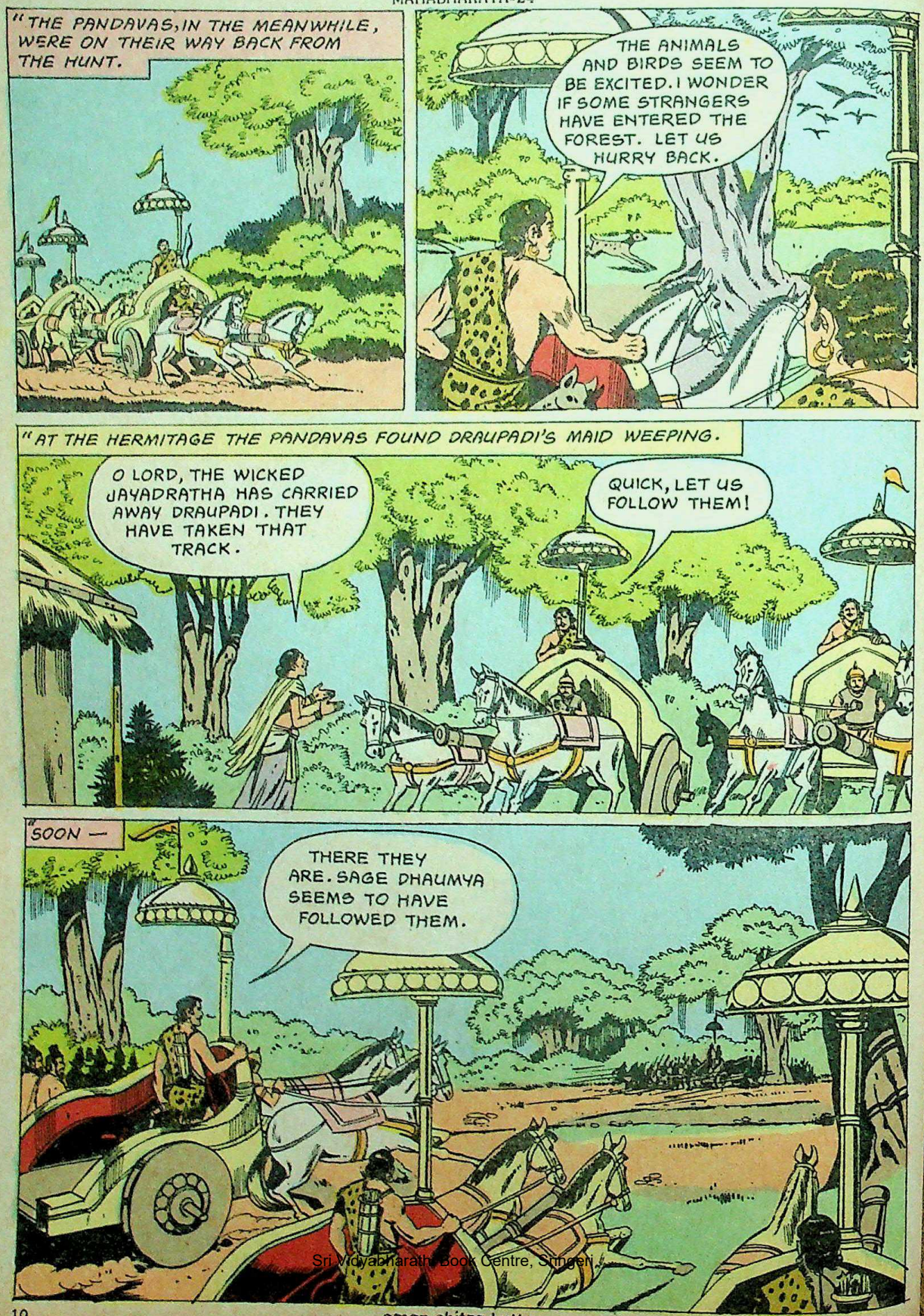

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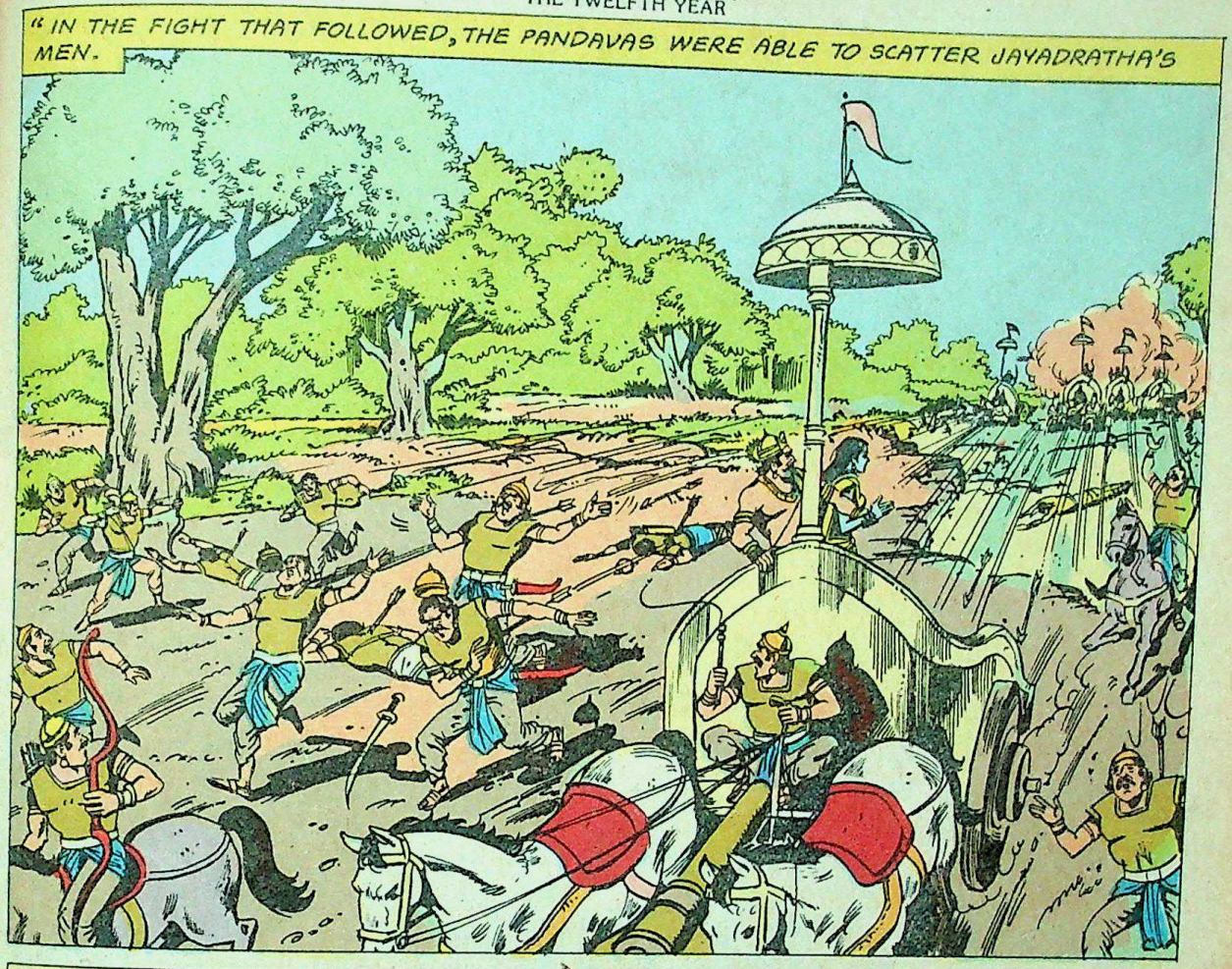

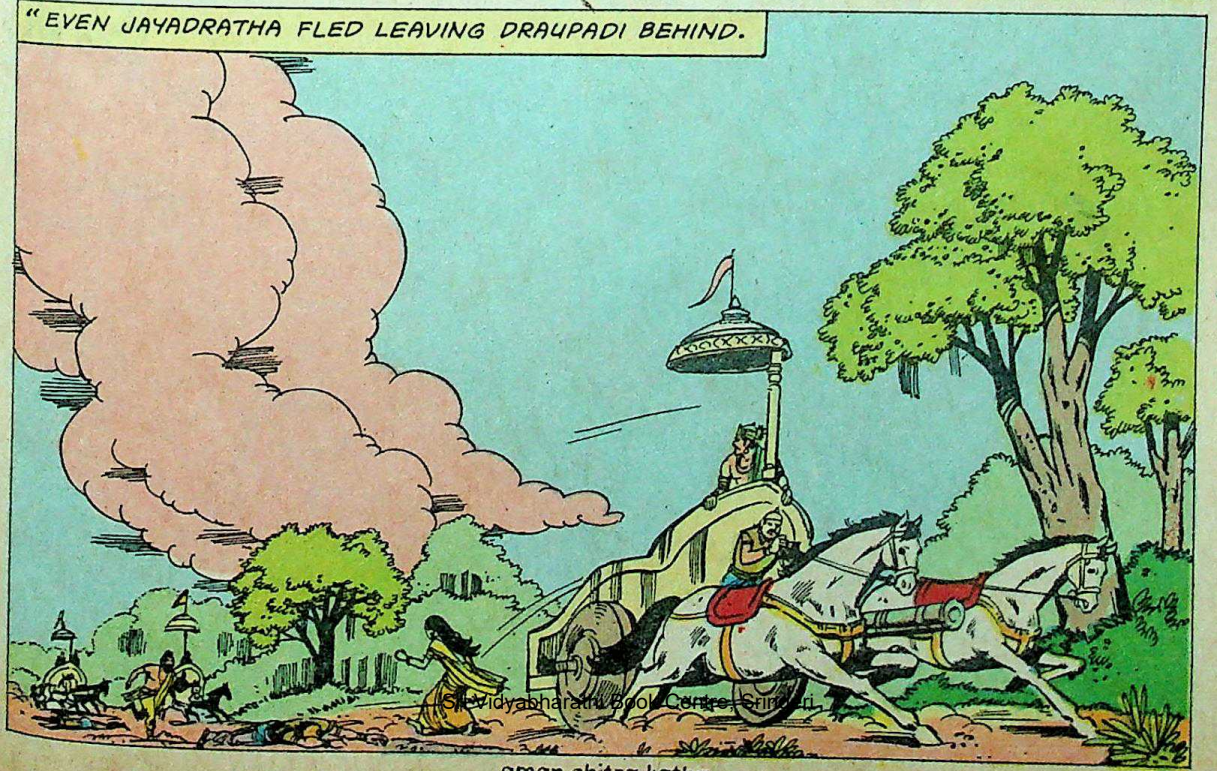

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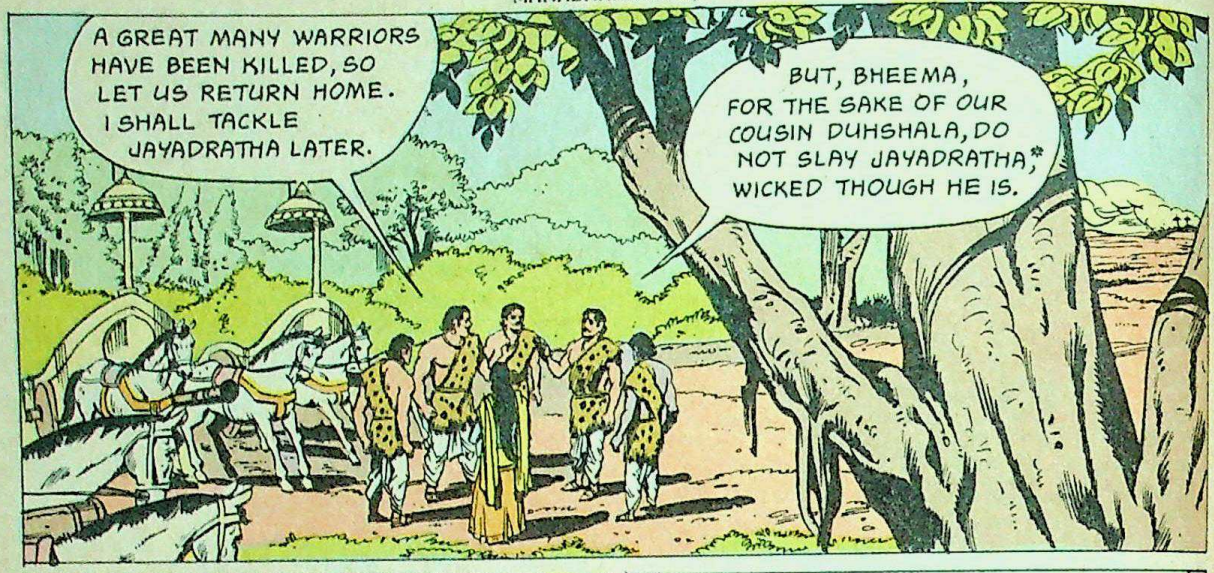

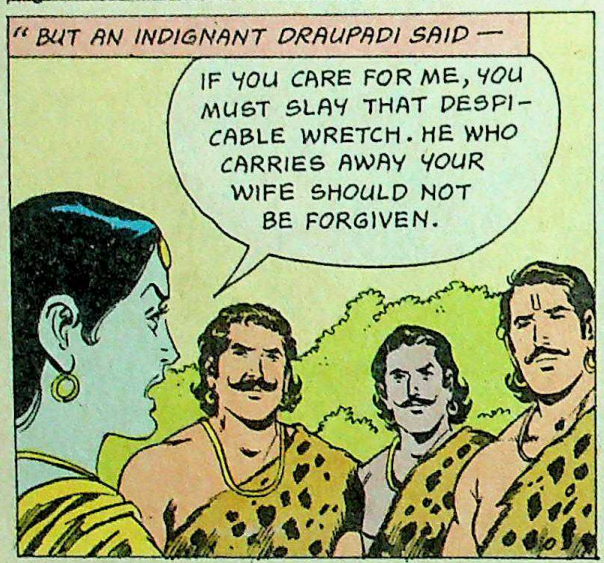

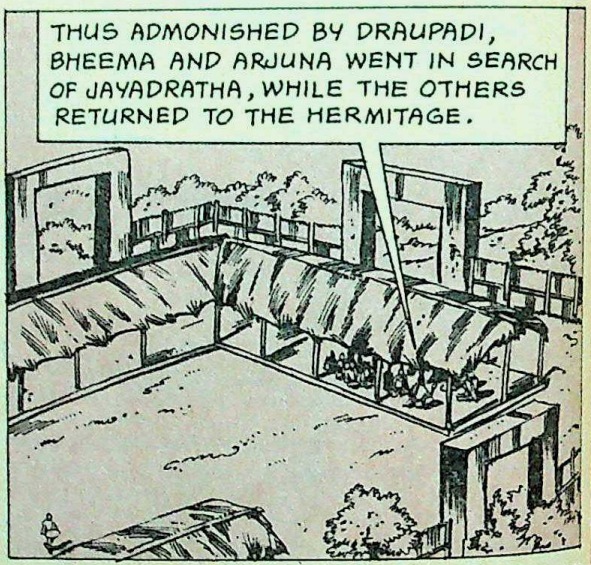

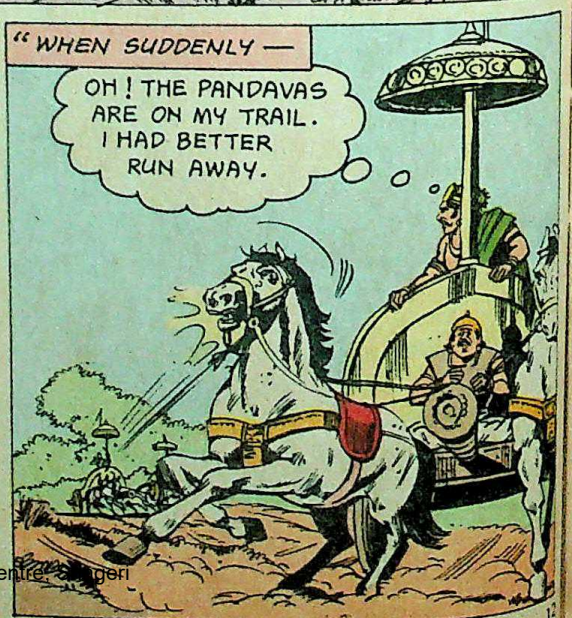

Priyadarshini Granthi Book Centre, Sangeri

* JAYADRATHA WAS THE HUSBAND OF DUHSHALA, DURYODHANA'S SISTER.

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"BUT—

STOP, JAYADRATHA!

"BHEEMA SEIZED HIM BY HIS HAIR AND KNOCKED HIM TO THE GROUND.

YOU SINFUL WRETCH! I WOULD KILL YOU IF IT WERE NOT FOR YUDHISHTHIRA'S MERCIFULNESS.

" THEN BHEEMA SHAVED JAYADRATHA'S HEAD.

IF YOU WISH TO LIVE YOU MUST DECLARE IN PUBLIC THAT YOU ARE A SLAVE TO THE PANDAVAS. THEN ALONE WILL I SPARE YOUR LIFE.

YES.

"THEN BHEEMA AND ARJUNA SECURED JAYADRATHA IN CHAINS AND FLUNG HIM INTO A CHARIOT.

"... AND DROVE BACK TO THE HERMITAGE.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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"THROWING JAYADRATHA AT YUDHISHTHIRA'S FEET, BHEEMA SAID—

YUDHISHTHIRA, TELL DRAUPADI THAT THIS MAN HAS BECOME A SLAVE OF THE PANDAVAS.

BHEEMA, IF YOU HAVE ANY REGARD FOR ME SET HIM FREE.

"DRAUPADI TOO SAID —

LET HIM OFF! HE HAS BECOME OUR SLAVE AND YOU HAVE DISFIGURED HIM. THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME.

"JAYADRATHA WAS UNCHAINED. AS HE PROSTRATED HIMSELF BEFORE YUDHISHTHIRA —

GO! YOU ARE A FREE MAN. BUT NEVER SET YOUR HEART ON EVIL DEEDS AGAIN.

OVERPOWERED BY SHAME, JAYADRATHA SOUGHT THE PROTECTION OF LORD SHIVA. HE OBSERVED SEVERE PENANCE ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA.

"FINALLY ONE DAY SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE JAYADRATHA.

I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. ASK FOR A BOON.

O LORD, GRANT THAT I MAY BE ABLE TO DEFEAT ALL FIVE PANDAVAS IN BATTLE.

THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE. THE PANDAVAS ARE UNCONQUERABLE IN BATTLE.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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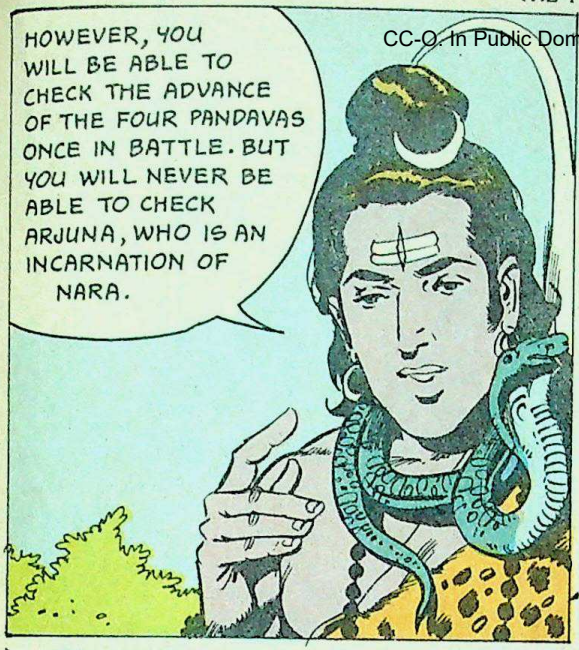

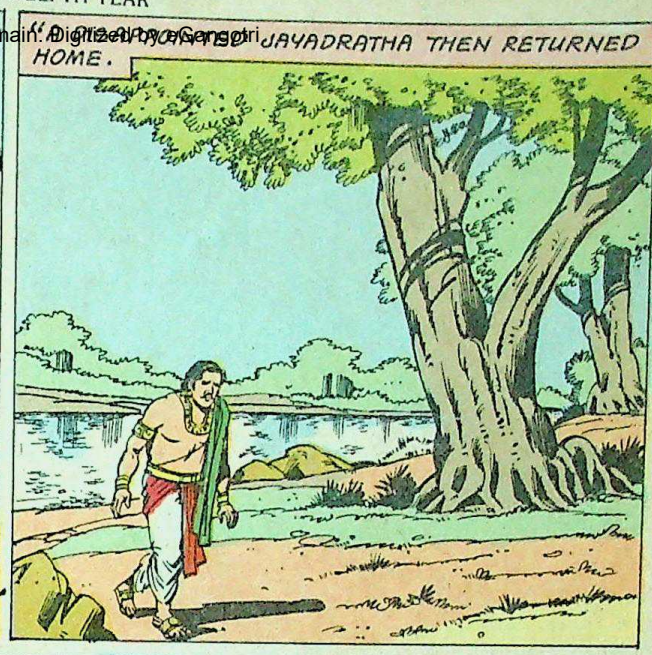

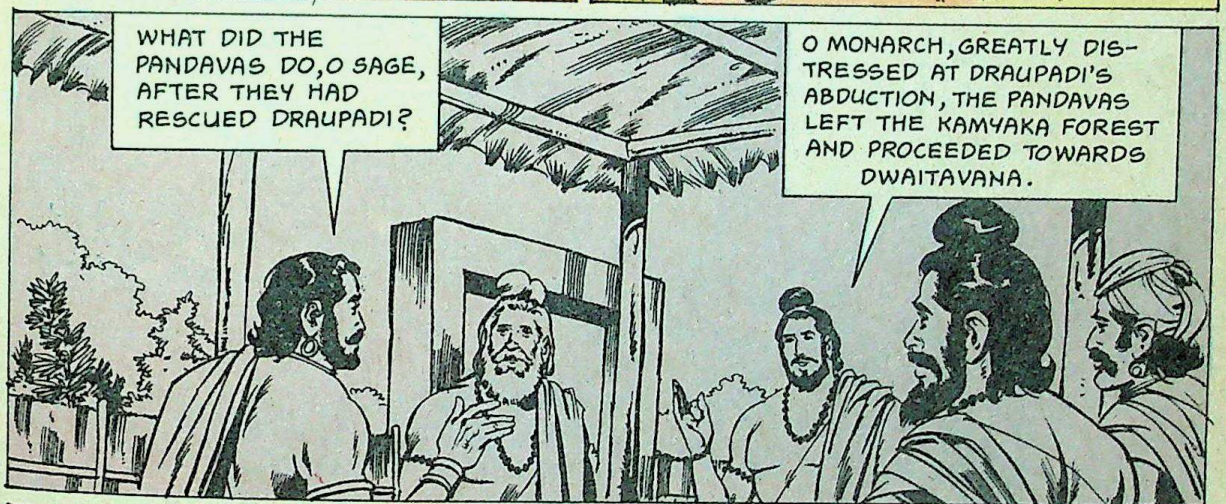

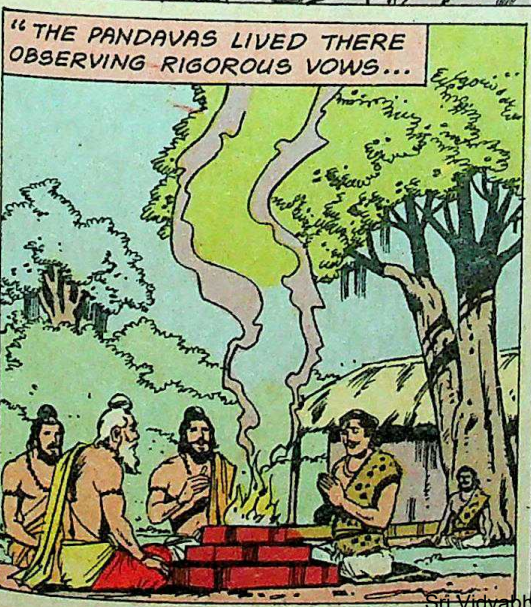

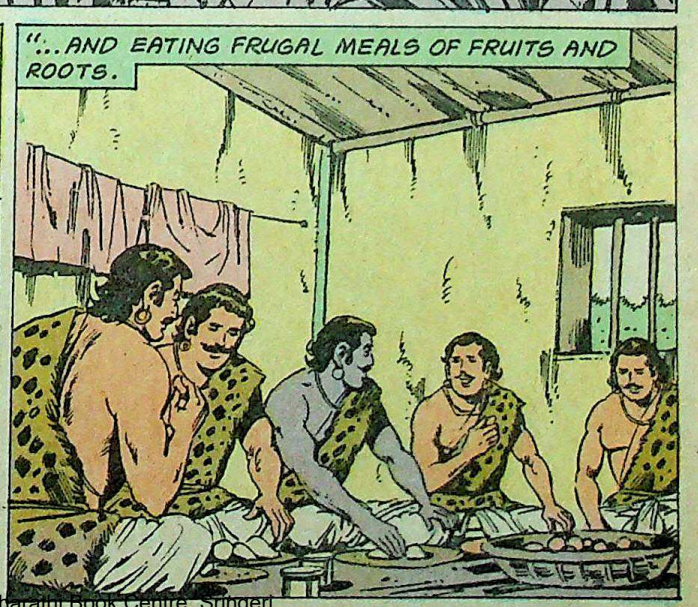

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" ONE DAY, WHILE THE PANDAVAS WERE DWELLING IN THE FOREST, A BRAHMANA APPROACHED YUDHISHTHIRA FOR HELP.

O KING! A DEER HAS ROMPED AWAY WITH MY SHAMI STICKS*. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO RETRIEVE THEM FOR ME.

I HAD HUNG THE BUNDLE OF STICKS FROM A TREE. A DEER CAME AND RUBBED AGAINST THE TREE, WHEREUPON...

...THE STICKS GOT ENTANGLED IN HIS ANTLERS AND HE FLED.

I CHASED HIM BUT HE WAS TOO SWIFT FOR ME. MAKE HASTE, OR ELSE, I SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE YAJNA.

* THE SHAMI STICKS WHEN RUBBED AGAINST EACH OTHER SET OFF SPARKS, WHICH LIGHT THE SACRIFICIAL FIRES.

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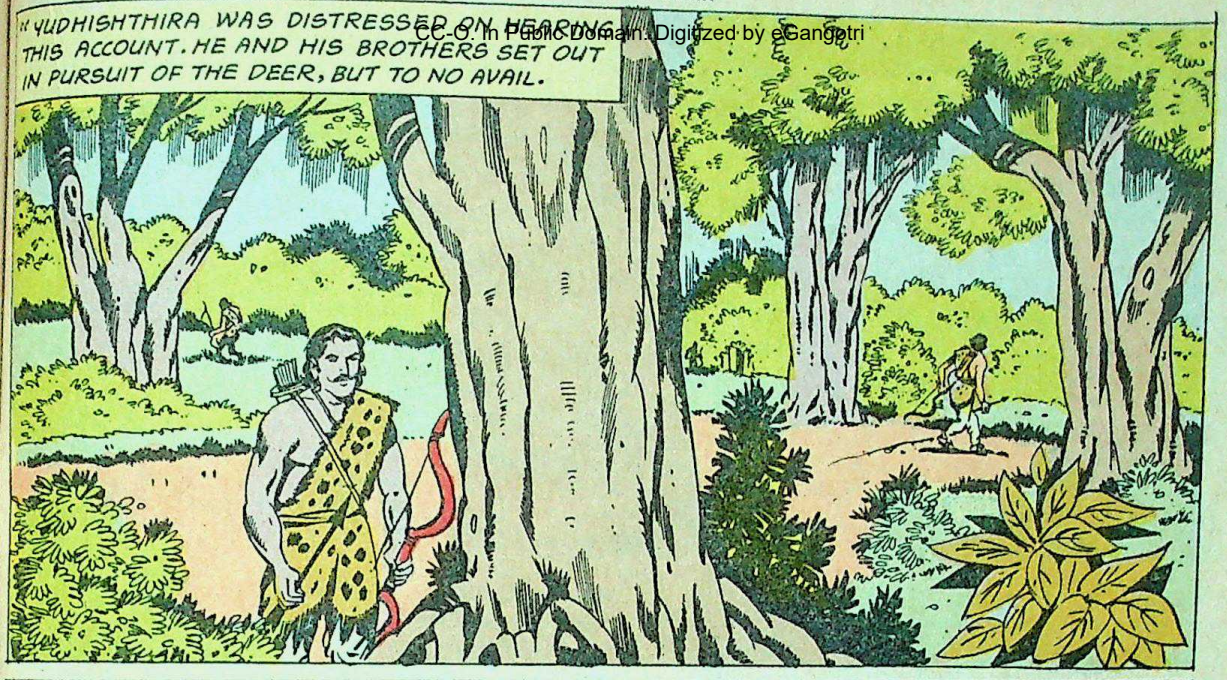

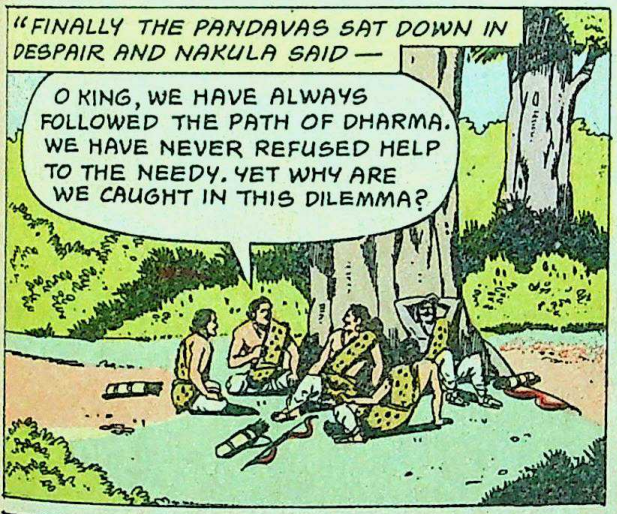

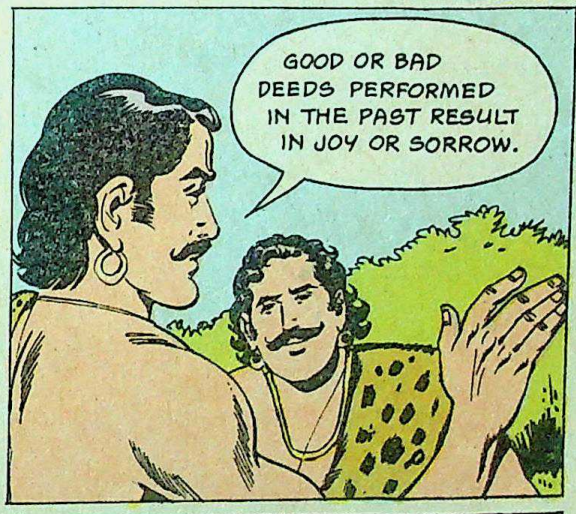

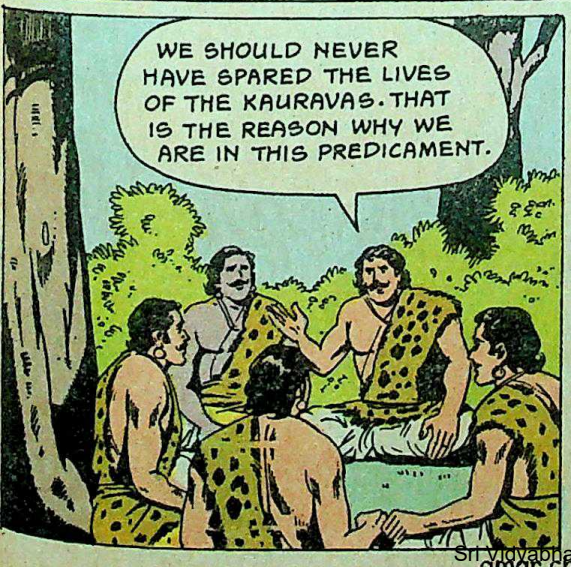

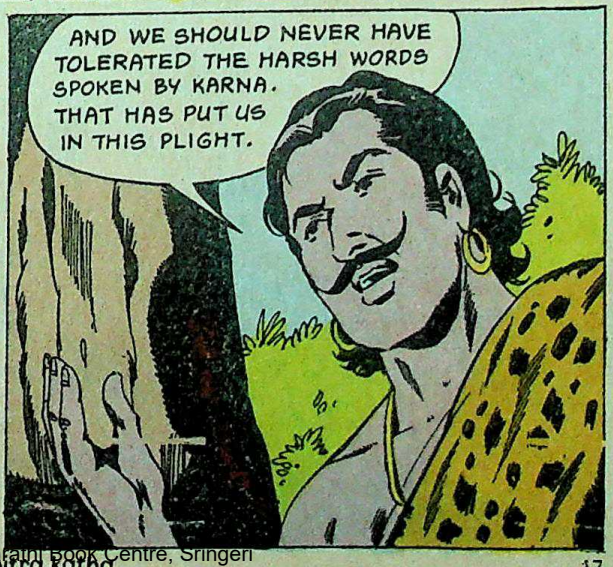

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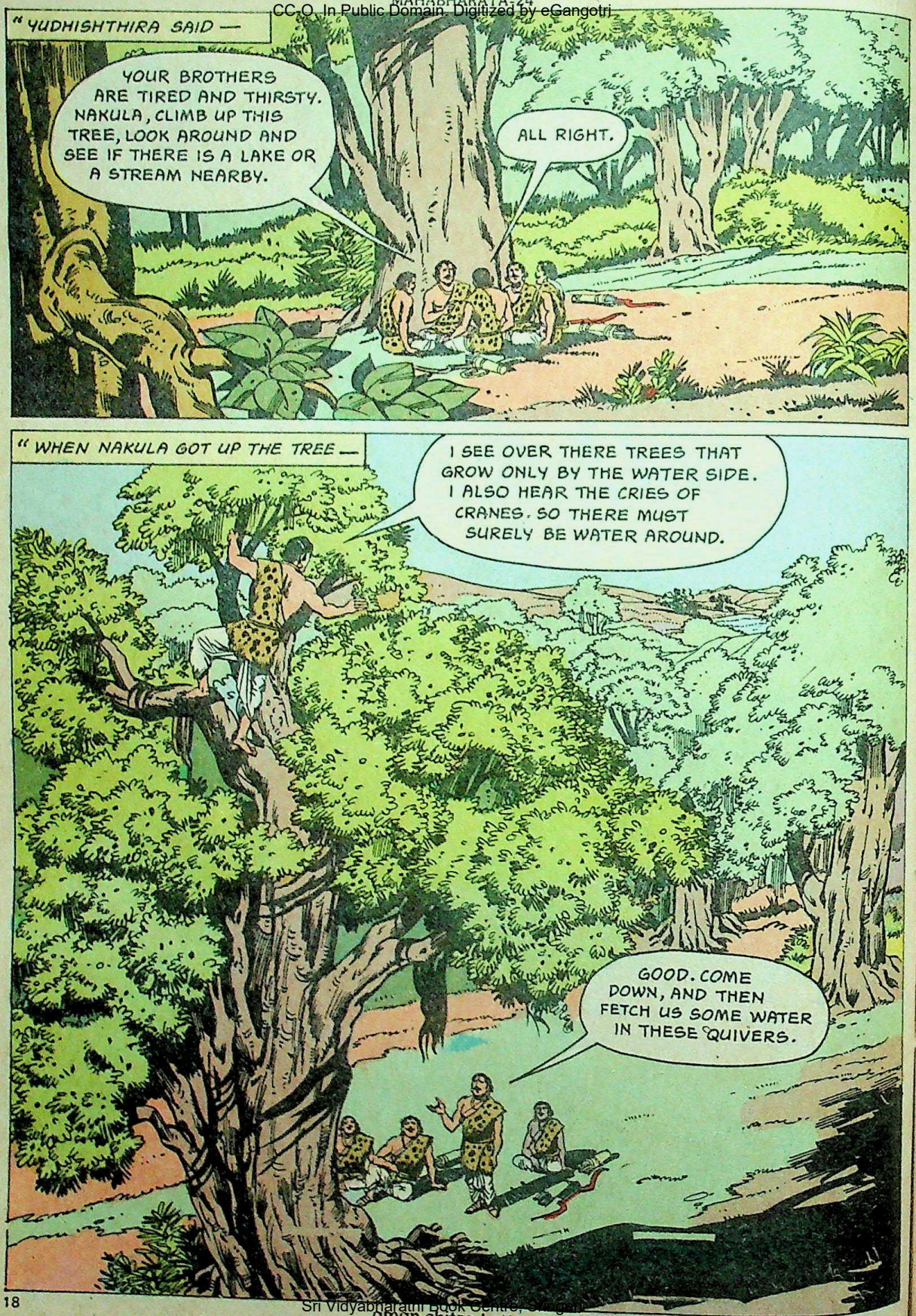

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"NAKULA HURRIED TOWARDS THE LAKE.

AT THE LAKE AS HE BENT OVER TO QUENCH HIS THIRST—

WAIT! THIS LAKE BELONGS TO ME. FIRST ANSWER MY QUESTIONS AND THEN YOU MAY DRINK THE WATER AND TAKE AWAY AS MUCH AS YOU REQUIRE.

"DISREGARDING THE VOICE, NAKULA DRANK THE WATER. NO SOONER HAD HE DONE THAT THAN HE FELL UNCONSCIOUS.

"IN THE MEANWHILE —

O SAHADEVA, NAKULA HAS TAKEN TOO LONG TO RETURN. GO, BRING HIM BACK. DO NOT FORGET THE WATER!

"SO SAHADEVA TOO SET OUT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE WATER.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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"AT THE LAKE —

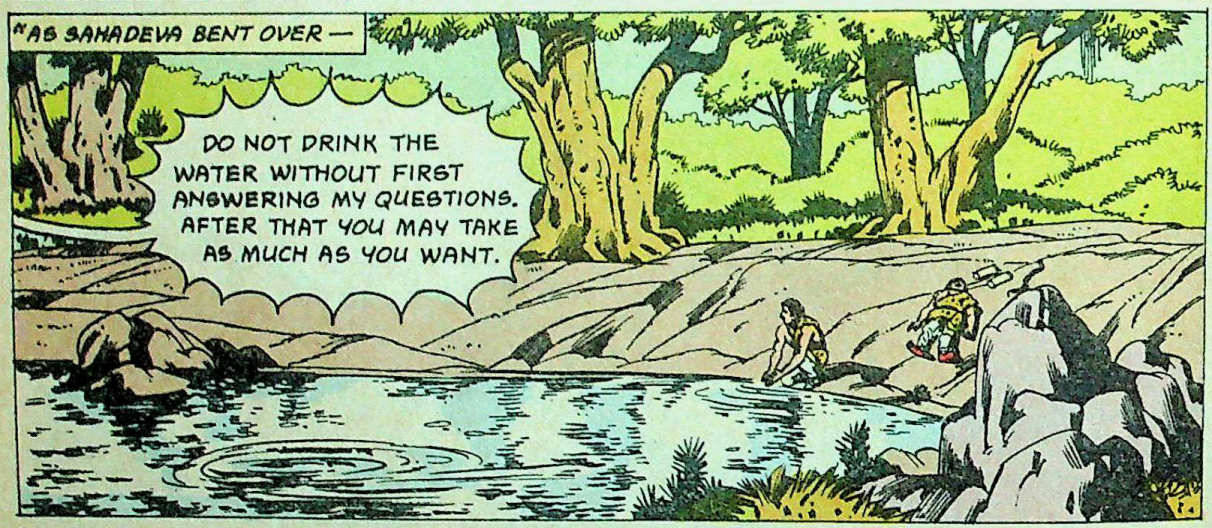
NAKULA! NAKULA! WHAT IS THE MATTER? HE MUST HAVE DIED OF THIRST. I HAD BETTER QUENCH MY THIRST BEFORE I MEET THE SAME FATE.

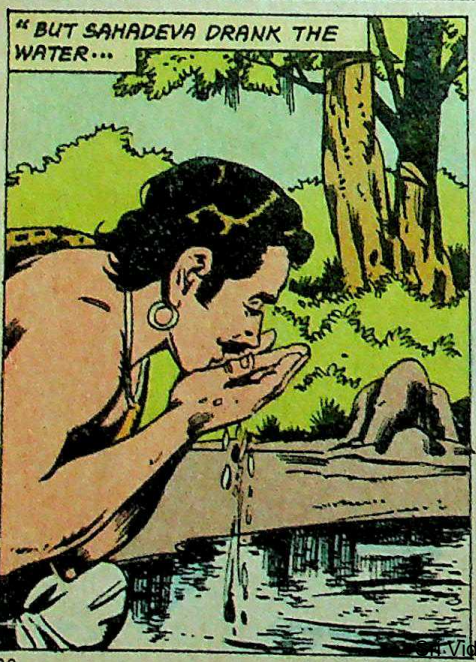
"AS SAHADEVA BENT OVER —

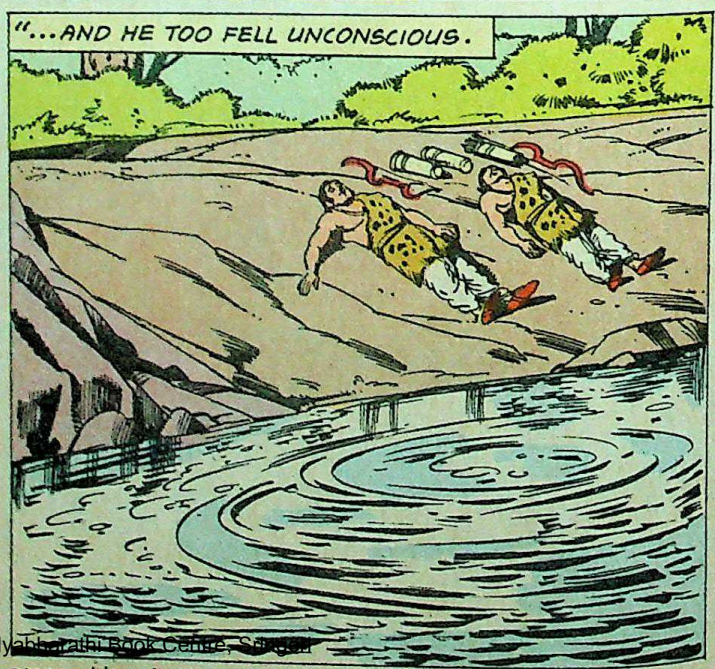
DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT FIRST ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS. AFTER THAT YOU MAY TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT.

"BUT SAHADEVA DRANK THE WATER...

"...AND HE TOO FELL UNCONSCIOUS.







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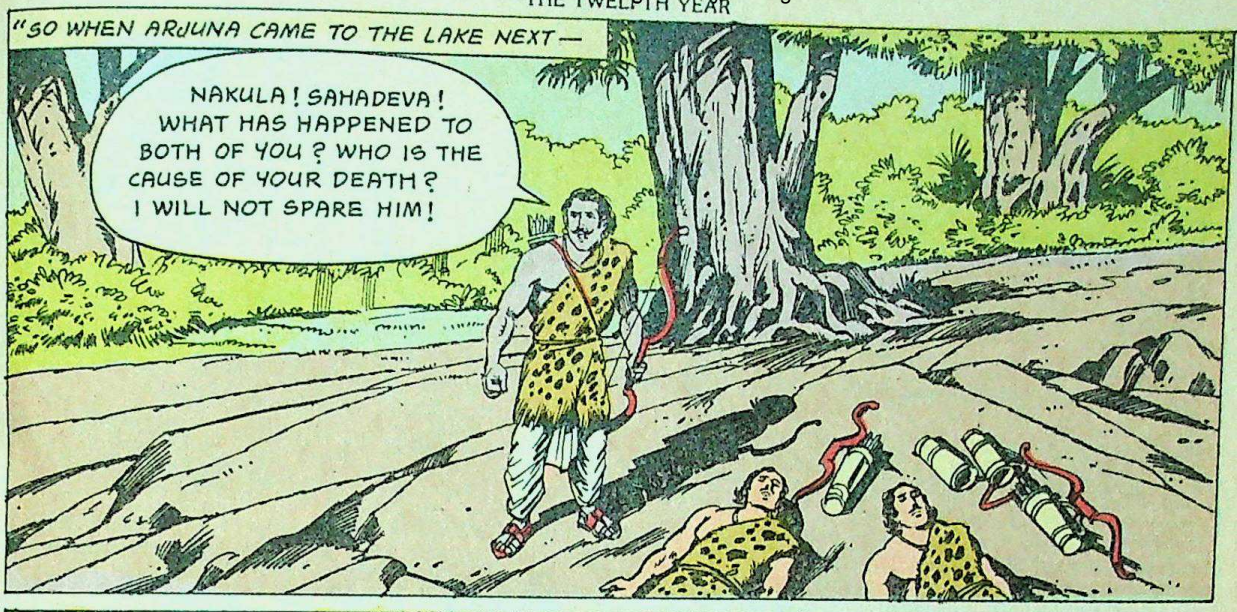

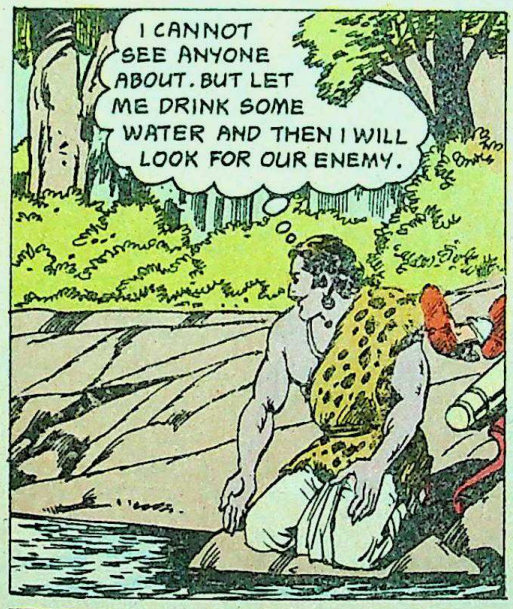

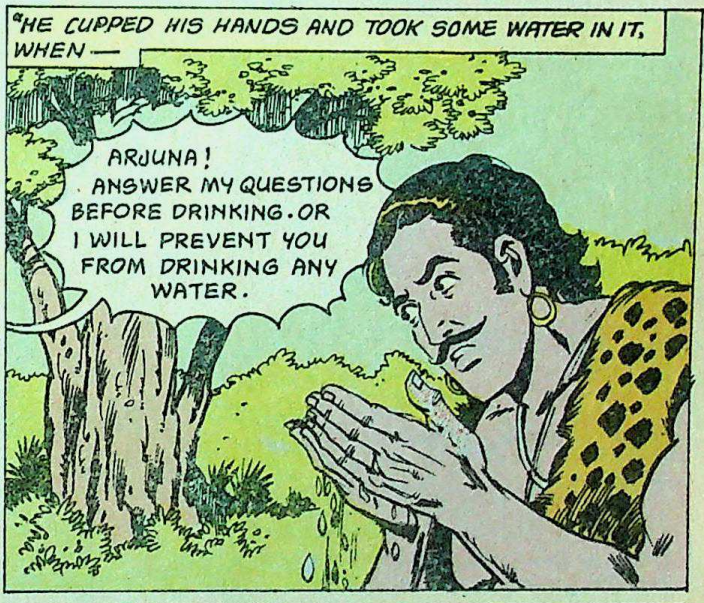

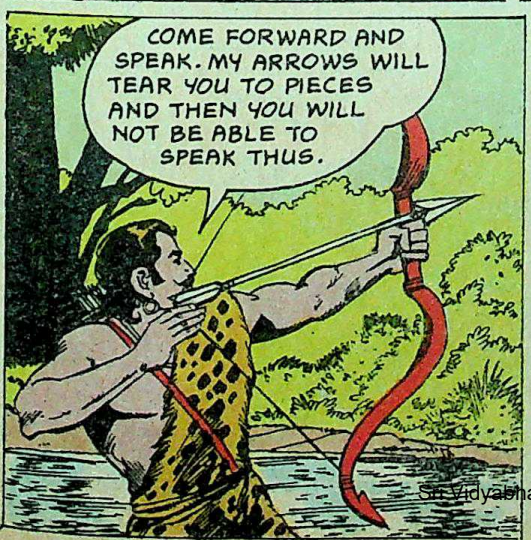

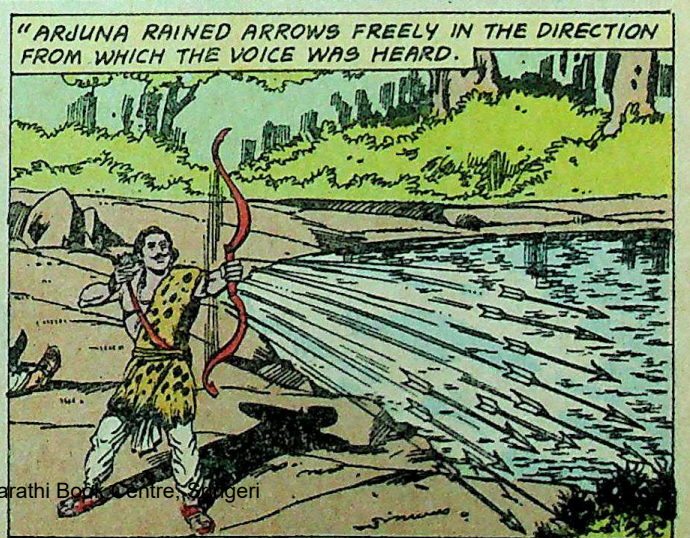

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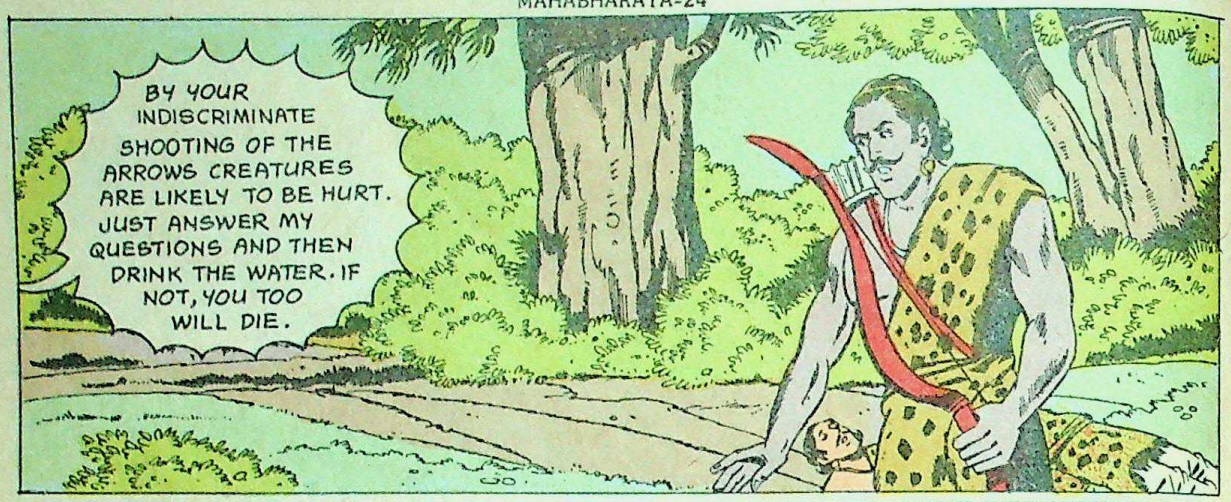

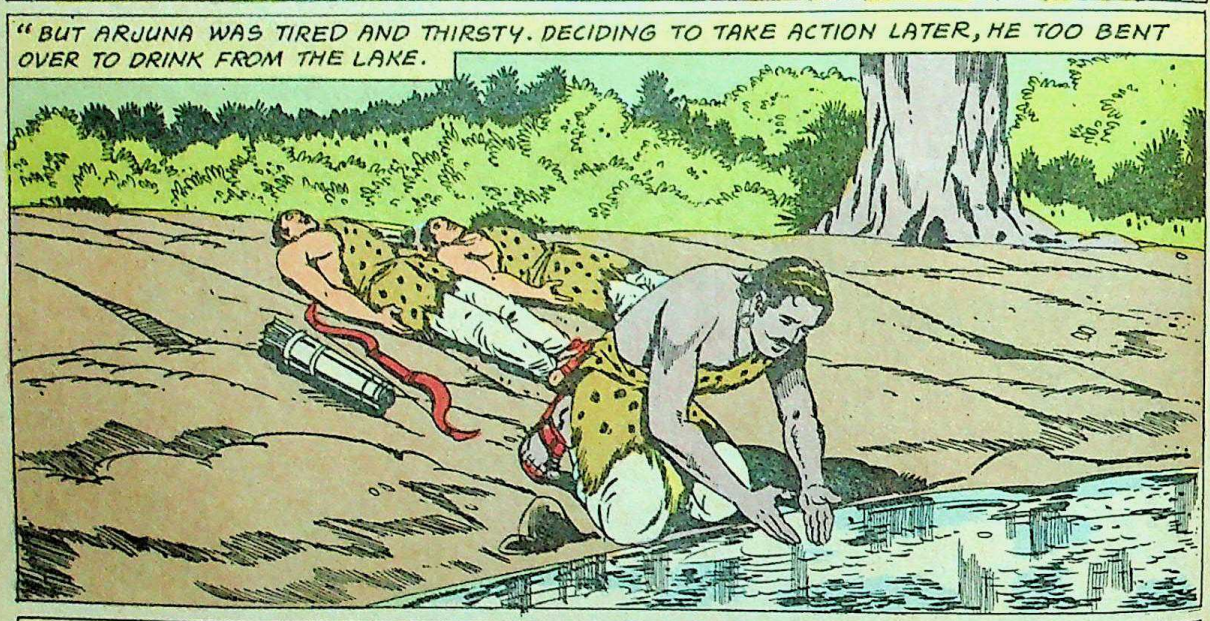

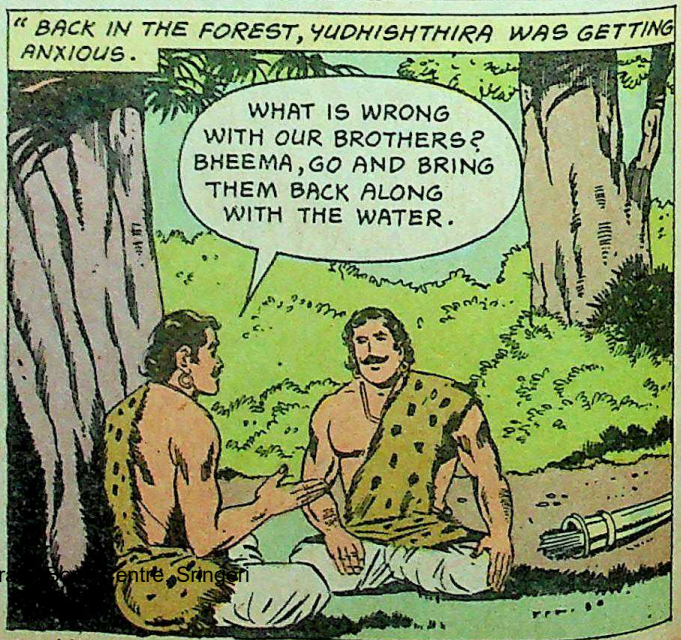

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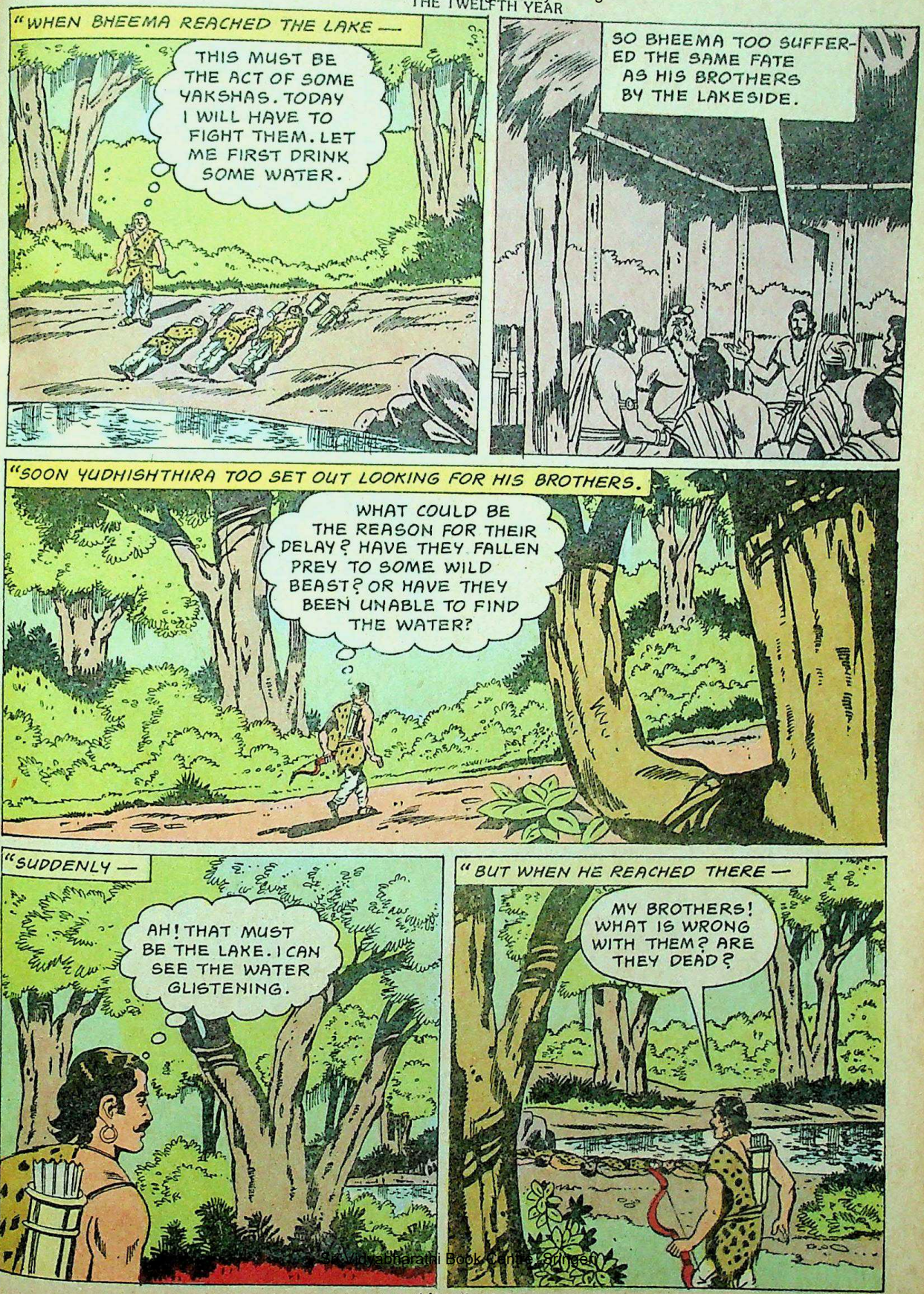

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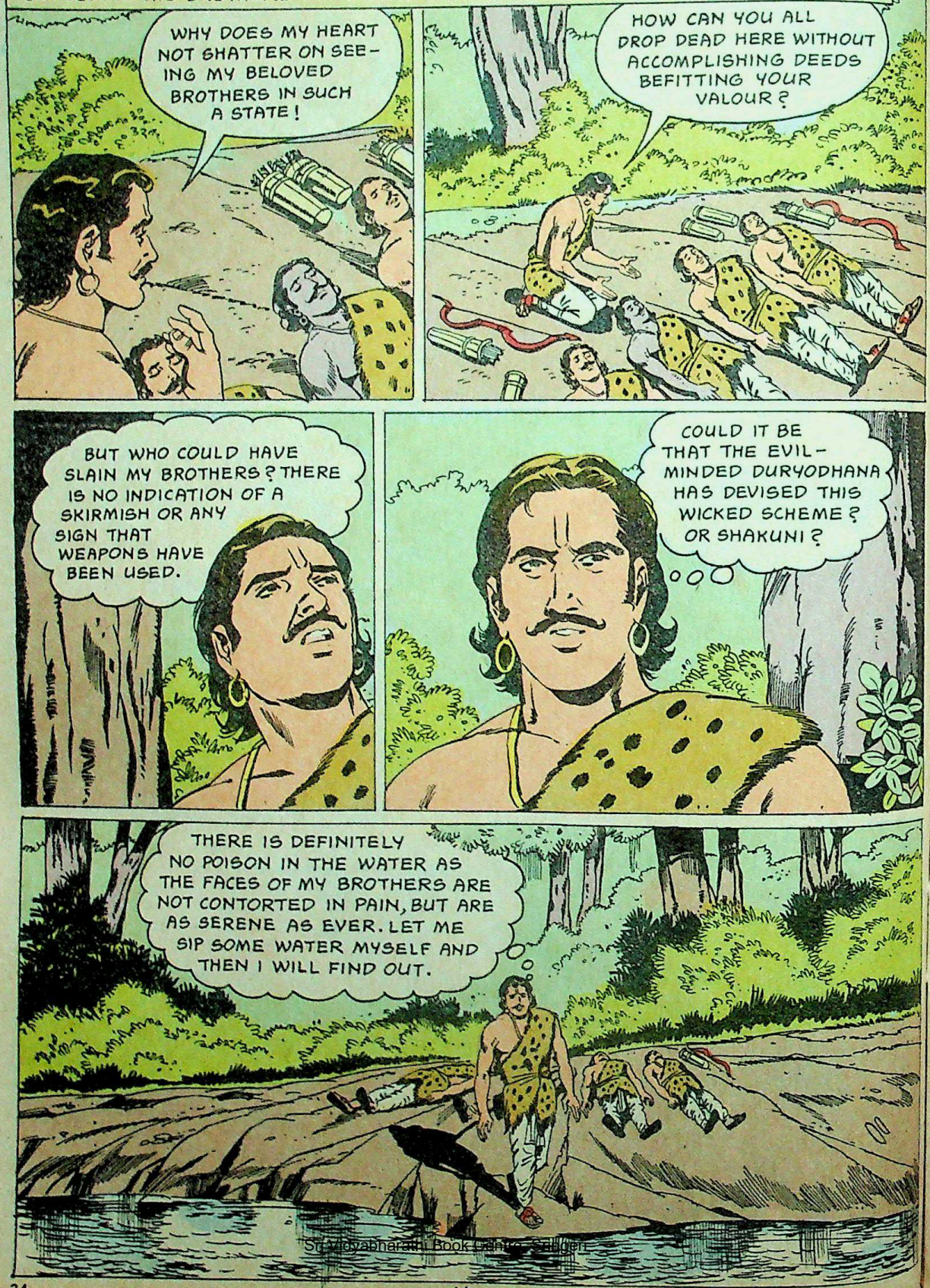
"BEHOLDING HIS BROTHERS LYING DEAD ON THE GROUND, YUDHISHTHIRA LAMENTED —



Sri Vidyabharathi Book Gallery, Salem

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"AS YUDHISHTHIRA DESCENDED TO THE LAKE, HE HEARD A VOICE—

I AM A CRANE. THIS LAKE BELONGS TO ME. I HAVE CAUSED THE DEATH OF YOUR BROTHERS AND IF YOU DO NOT ANSWER MY QUERIES YOU WILL MEET THE SAME FATE.

"THE VOICE SAID—

I AM A YAKSHA, NOT A BIRD. IT IS BY MY POWER THAT YOUR BROTHERS LIE HERE DEAD. IF YOU ANSWER MY QUESTIONS YOU MAY DRINK FROM MY LAKE.

WHO ARE YOU? A RUDRA, A VASU OR A MARUT? A MERE BIRD COULD NOT HAVE KILLED THESE MIGHTY WARRIORS. YOU ARE INDEED POWERFUL, FOR YOU HAVE KILLED THOSE WHOM NEITHER GODS NOR GANDHARVAS, NOR ASURAS, NOR RAKSHASAS COULD SLAY. PRAY TELL ME WHO YOU ARE.

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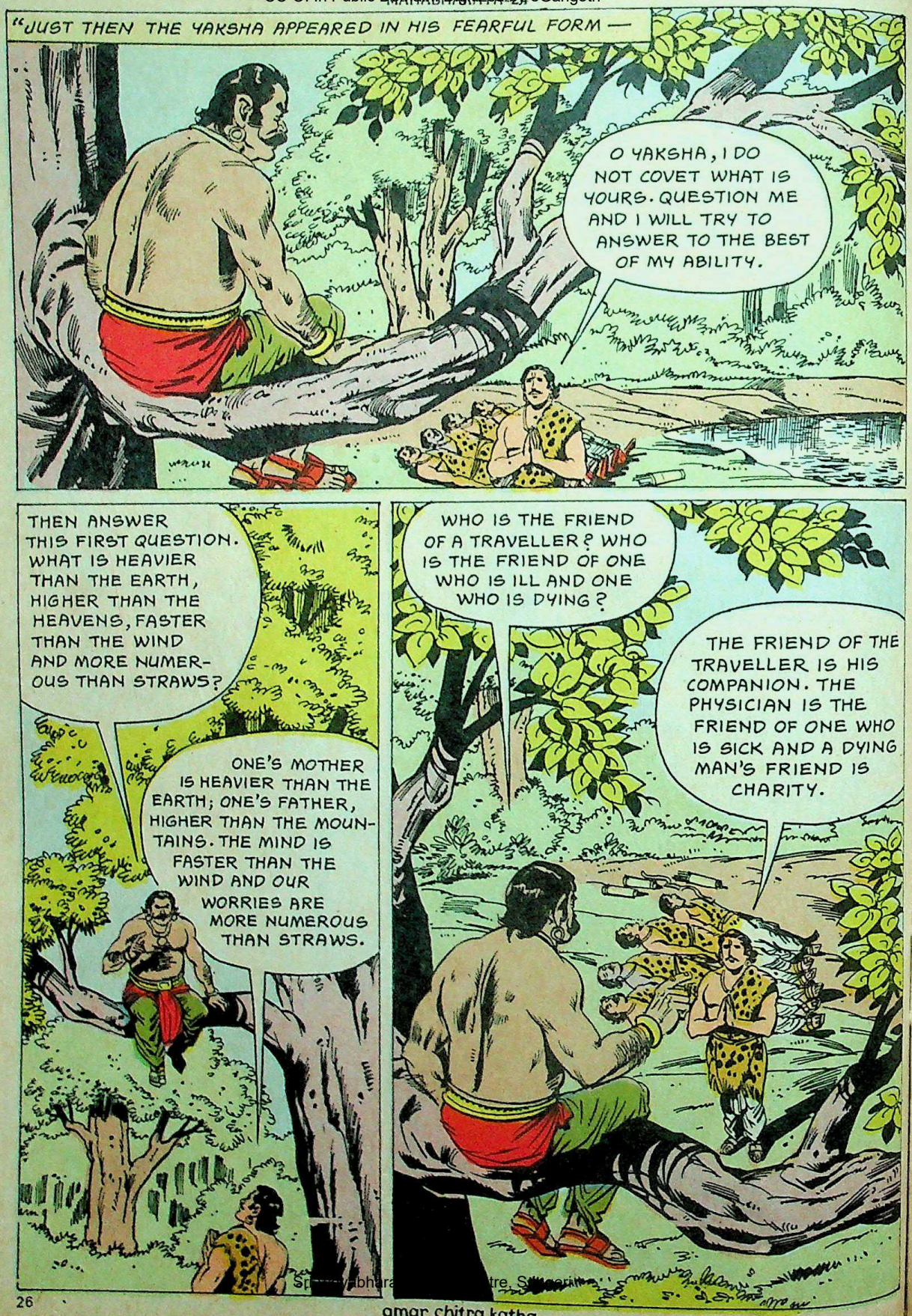

"JUST THEN THE YAKSHA APPEARED IN HIS FEARFUL FORM —

O YAKSHA, I DO NOT COVET WHAT IS YOURS. QUESTION ME AND I WILL TRY TO ANSWER TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

THEN ANSWER THIS FIRST QUESTION. WHAT IS HEAVIER THAN THE EARTH, HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS, FASTER THAN THE WIND AND MORE NUMEROUS THAN STRAWS?

ONE'S MOTHER IS HEAVIER THAN THE EARTH; ONE'S FATHER, HIGHER THAN THE MOUNTAINS. THE MIND IS FASTER THAN THE WIND AND OUR WORRIES ARE MORE NUMEROUS THAN STRAWS.

WHO IS THE FRIEND OF A TRAVELLER? WHO IS THE FRIEND OF ONE WHO IS ILL AND ONE WHO IS DYING?

THE FRIEND OF THE TRAVELLER IS HIS COMPANION. THE PHYSICIAN IS THE FRIEND OF ONE WHO IS SICK AND A DYING MAN'S FRIEND IS CHARITY.

Sp... ...abhara... ...tre, S...

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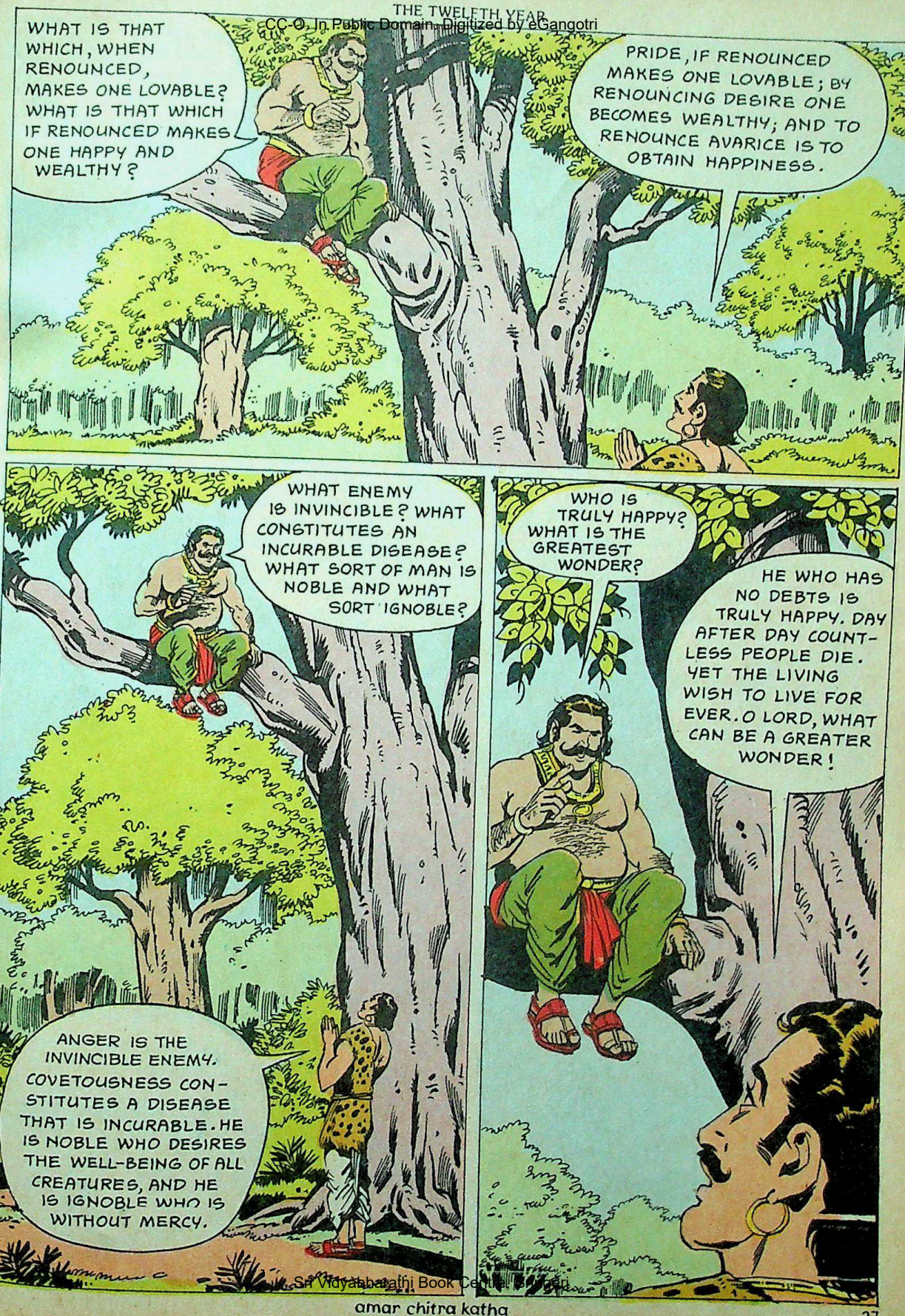

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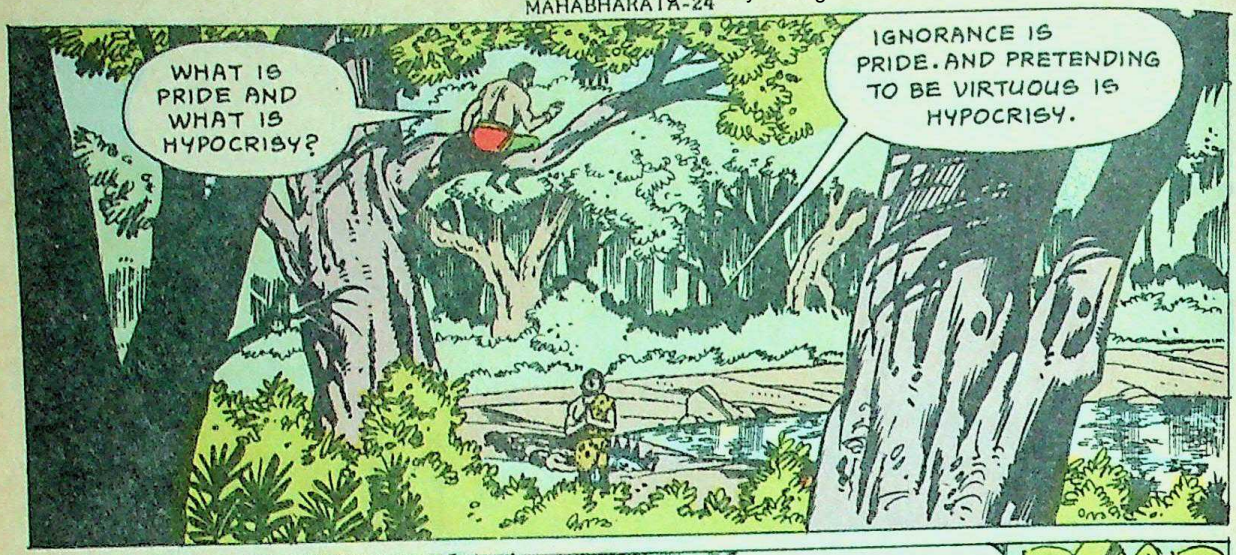

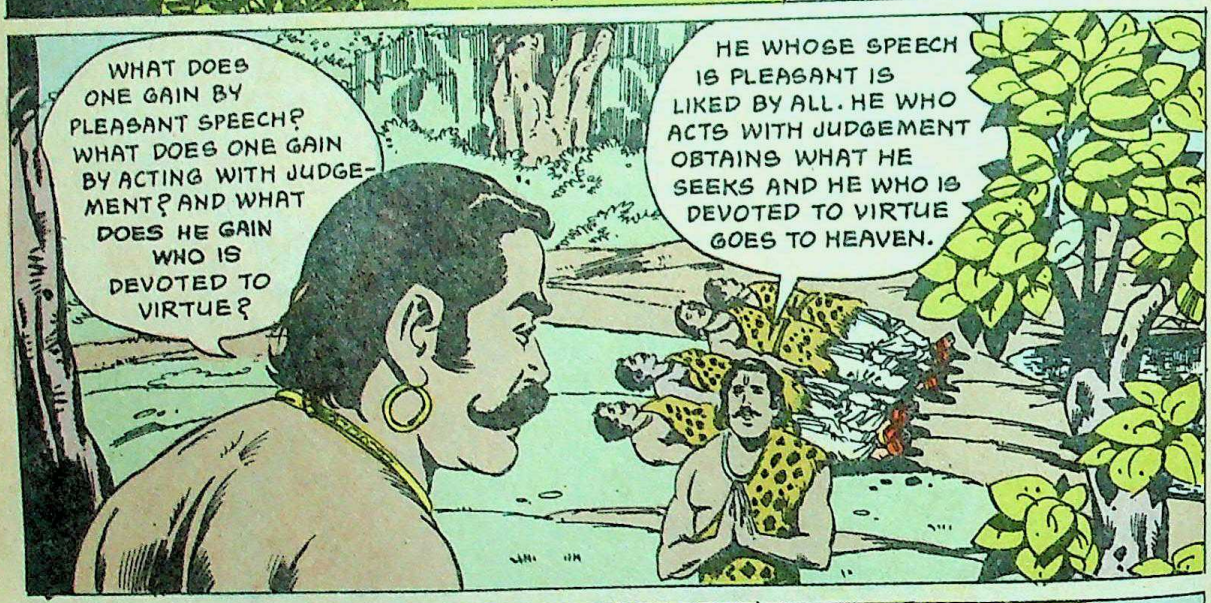

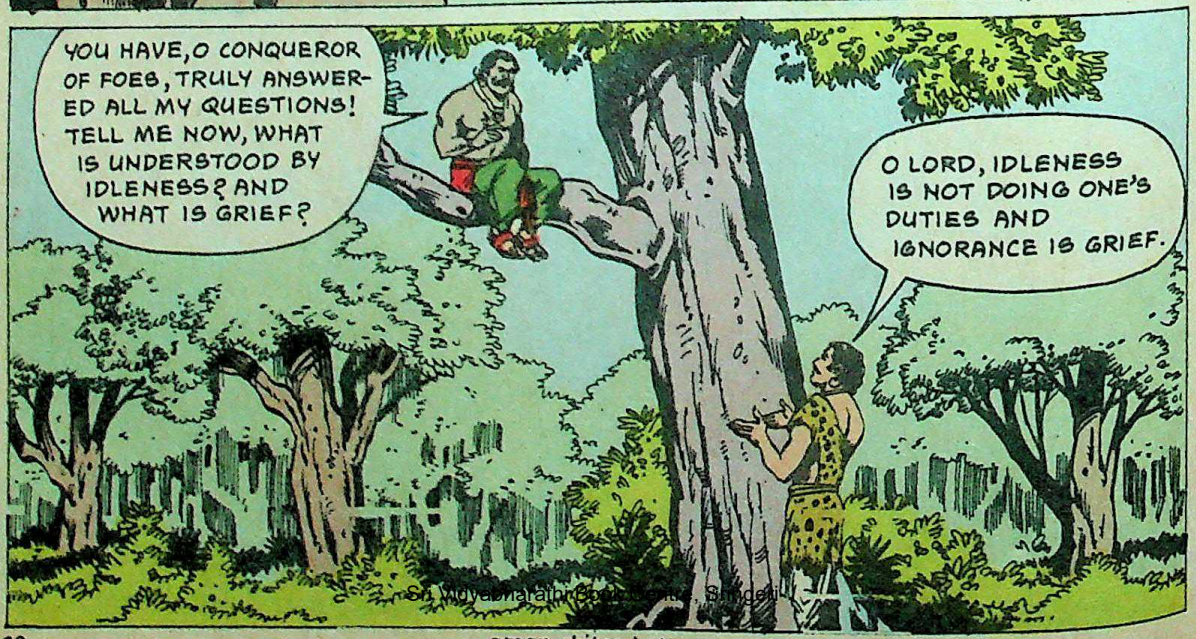

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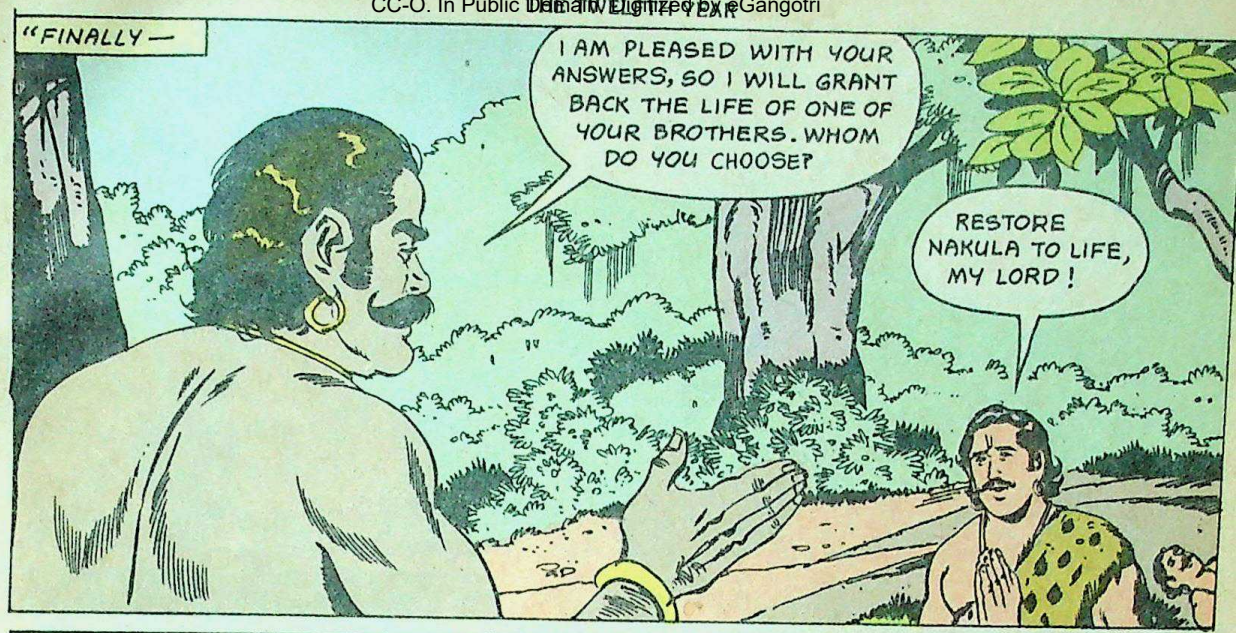
"FINALLY —

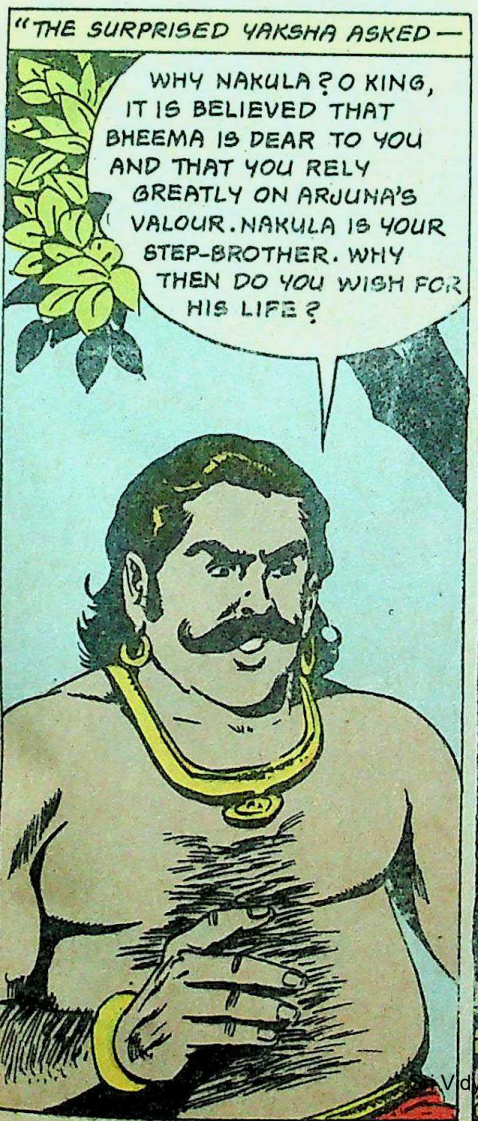
I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR ANSWERS, SO I WILL GRANT BACK THE LIFE OF ONE OF YOUR BROTHERS. WHOM DO YOU CHOOSE?

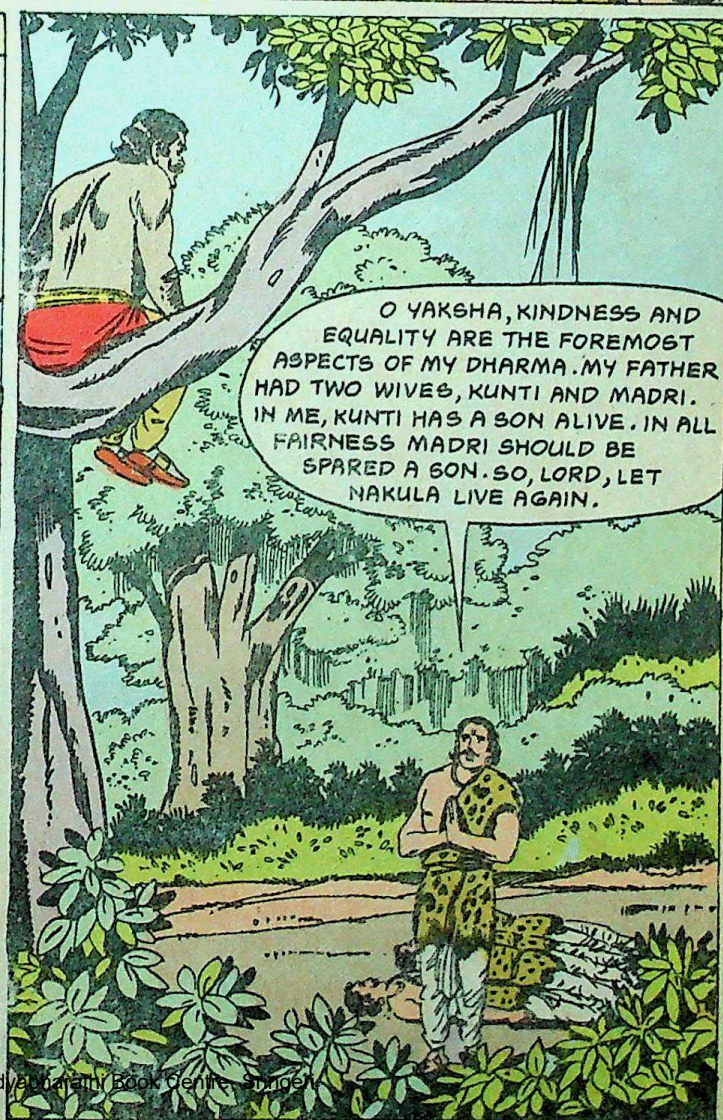
RESTORE NAKULA TO LIFE, MY LORD!

"THE SURPRISED YAKSHA ASKED —

WHY NAKULA? O KING, IT IS BELIEVED THAT BHEEMA IS DEAR TO YOU AND THAT YOU RELY GREATLY ON ARJUNA'S VALOUR. NAKULA IS YOUR STEP-BROTHER. WHY THEN DO YOU WISH FOR HIS LIFE?







O YAKSHA, KINDNESS AND EQUALITY ARE THE FOREMOST ASPECTS OF MY DHARMA. MY FATHER HAD TWO WIVES, KUNTI AND MADRI. IN ME, KUNTI HAS A SON ALIVE. IN ALL FAIRNESS MADRI SHOULD BE SPARED A SON. SO, LORD, LET NAKULA LIVE AGAIN.

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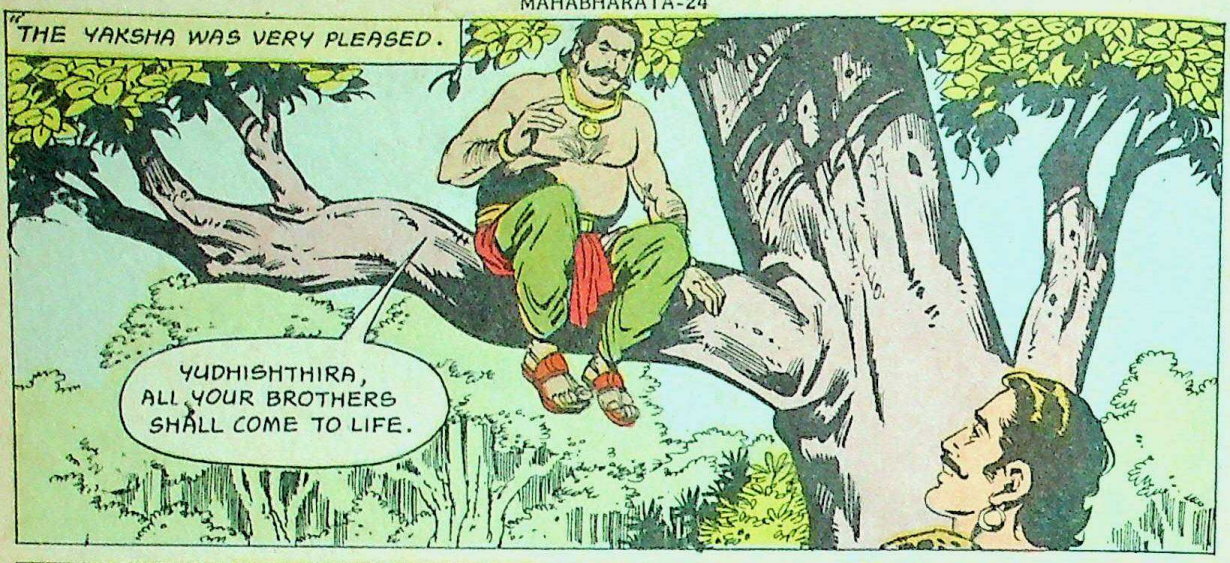

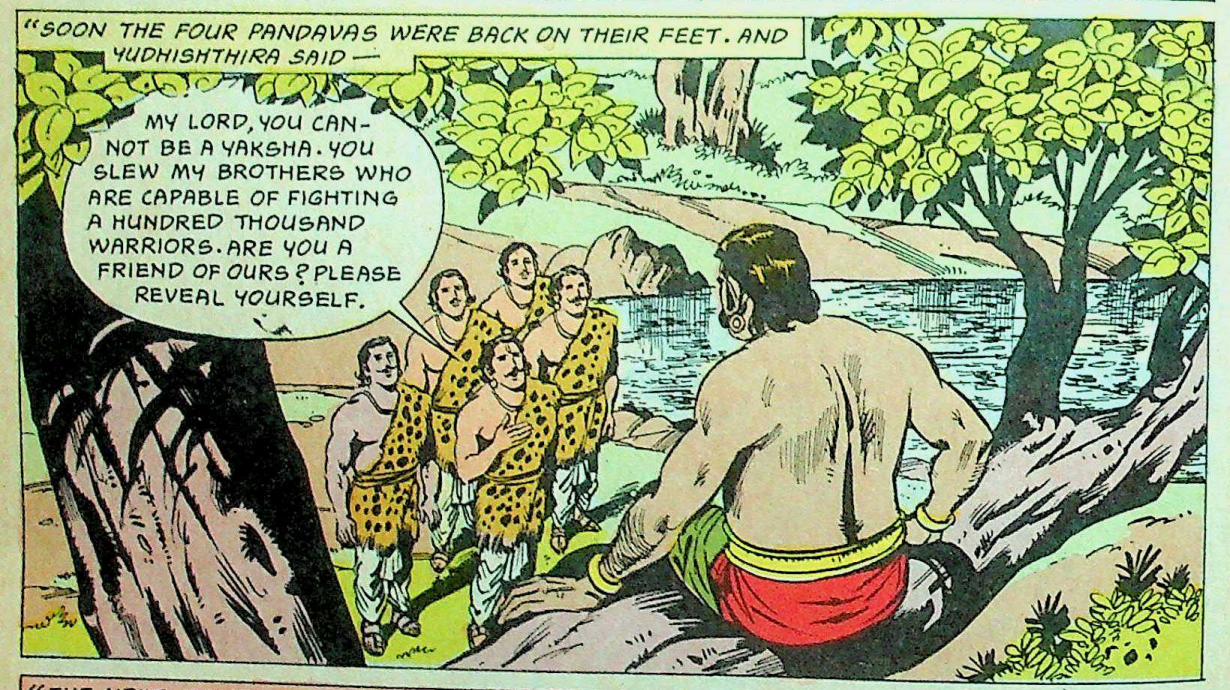

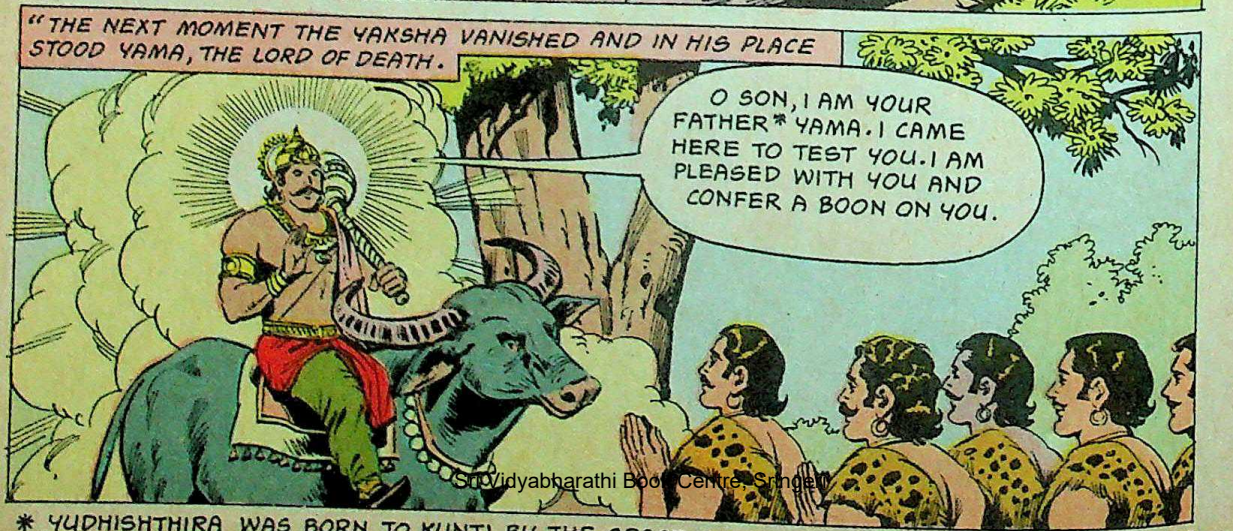

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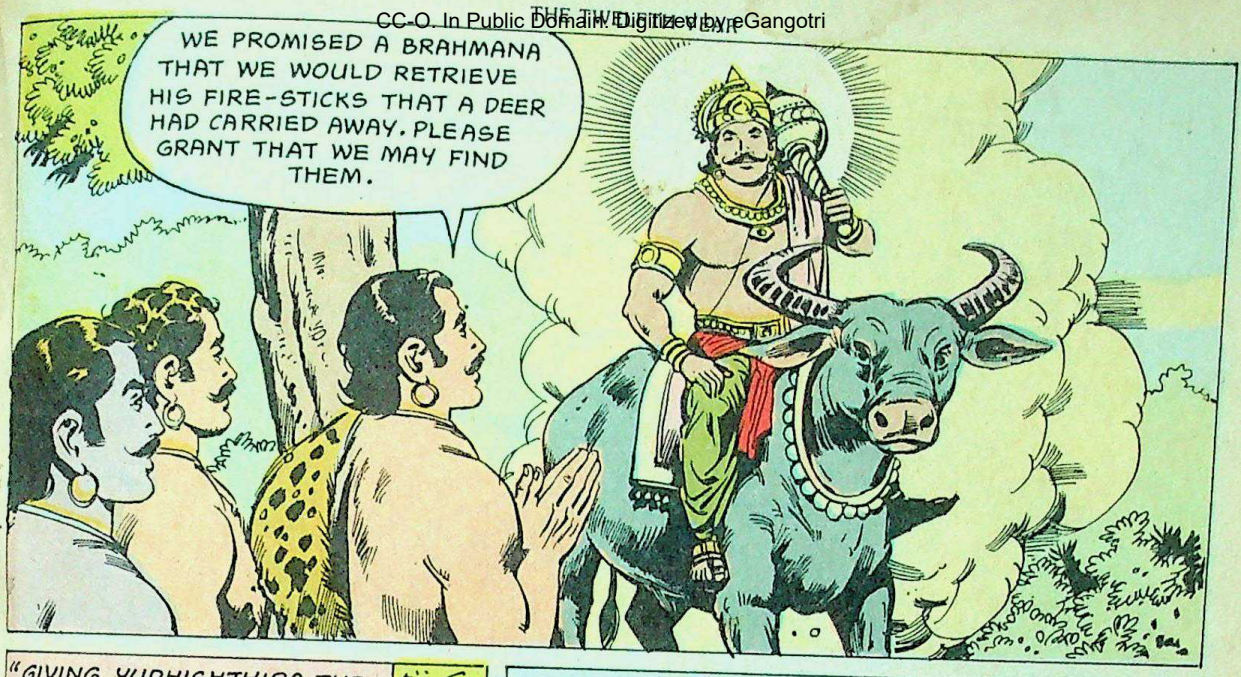

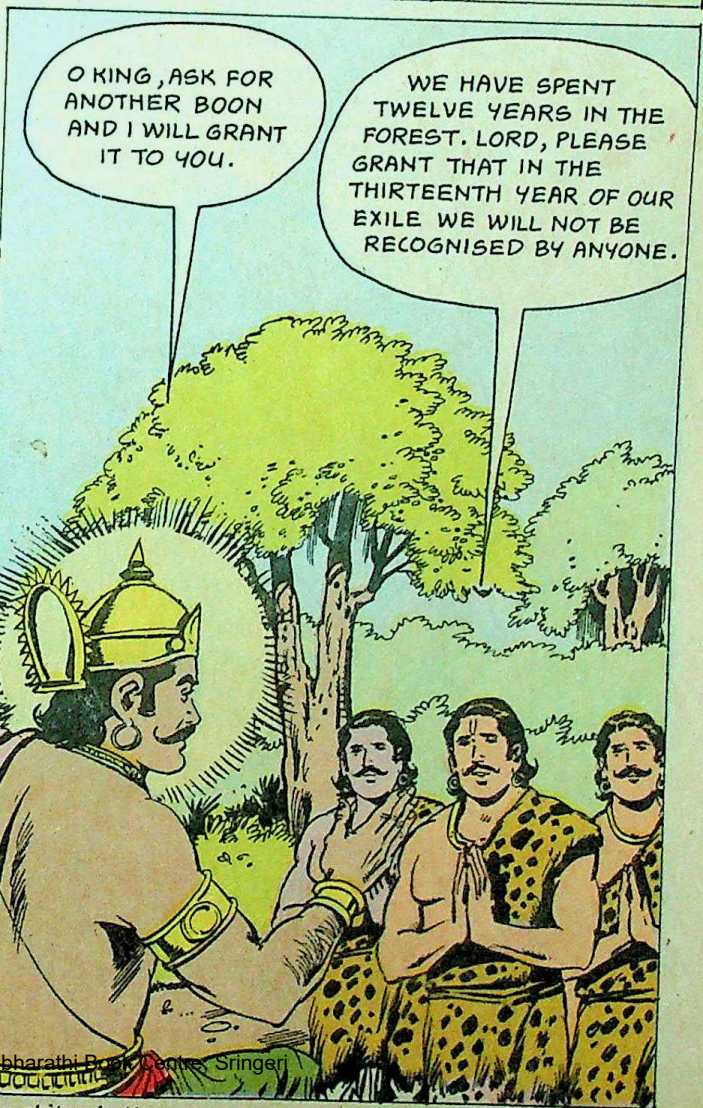

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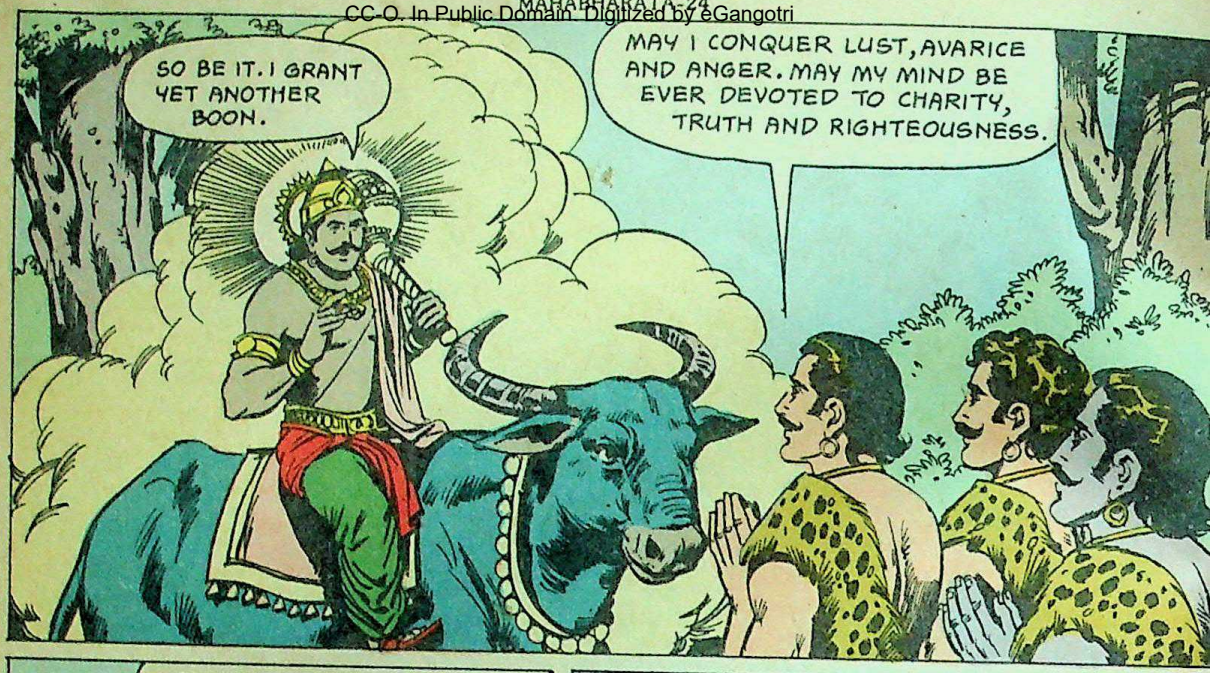

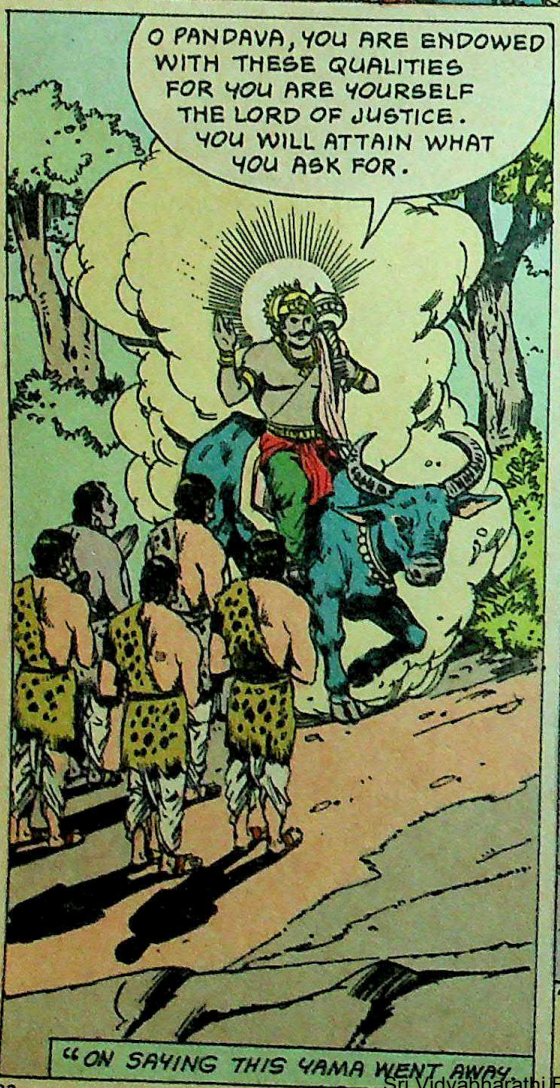

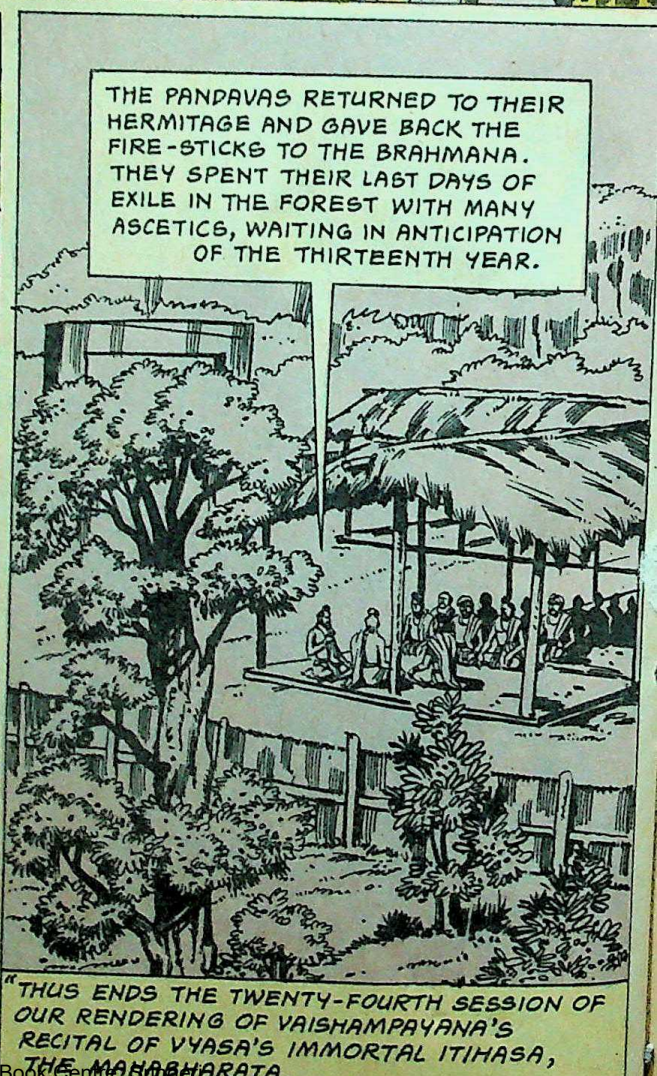

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